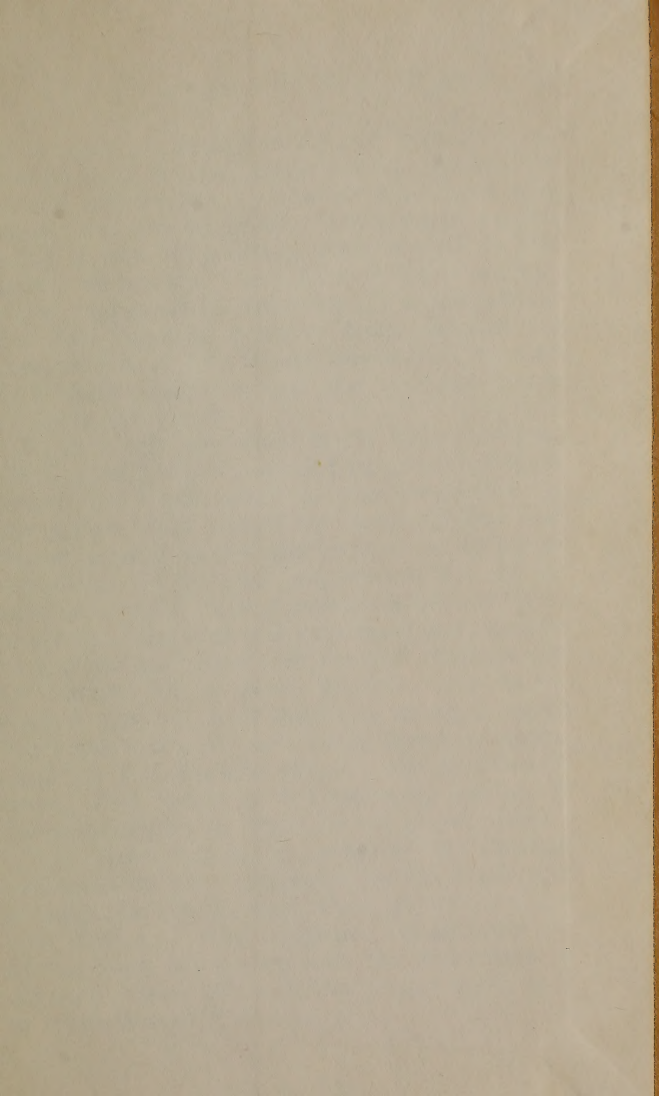




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in search of subsistence. It was natural enough that the Balkan peninsula should offer special attractions to them. The land was fertile, the climate good. The country, occupying a central position with regard to the three continents that formed the ancient world, had great facilities for a trading centre. The Via Egnatia, running from Salonica to Drach (Durazzo) by Bitoly (Monastir), became in Roman times one of the greatest trade routes in the world.

In the early centuries of the Christian era, the Roman Empire, which had extended itself round the Mediterranean, was weakened by the tribes that swept its borderlands, and Rome ceased to be the centre of Imperial interests. It became imperative to choose another capital. Constantine's genius led him to see that the city of Byzantium was the key to Europe and Asia. It seemed marked out by nature for a great capital. Its horn-shaped harbour had acquired in quite early times the name of the Golden Horn, a cornucopia of the world's riches. He fortified it anew, and made it his capital, calling it Constantinople, or the City of Constantine.

The Slavs began to come to the Balkan peninsula in great numbers in the sixth and seventh centuries, and they penetrated far into Greece. The original inhabitants of Illyria were driven up into the fastnesses of Albania, while other tribes found their way to what is now Rumania.

The South Slavs of this period were a race of herdsmen and tillers of the soil, owning sheep and horned cattle, and living on bread made of millet seed. Gibbon describes them as "chaste, patient and hospitable." "They fought on foot," he says, "almost naked, and, except an unwieldy shield, without any defensive armour; their weapons of offence were a bow, a quiver of small poisoned arrows, and a long rope, which they dexterously threw from a distance and entangled their enemy in a running noose. In the field Slavonian infantry were dangerous by their speed, agility and hardiness; they swam, they dived, they remained under water, drawing their breath through a hollow cane; they were impatient of restraint and formed semi-independent tribes." This trait in their character led to their subjection, but the love of freedom of which it was the untutored manifestation, has brought some of them again to independence under difficulties which seemed insuperable. From other writers we learn that they had a ruddy complexion and reddish hair.

The Emperor Heraclius granted land between the Danube and the Adriatic to the Slavs on condition that they recognised his suzerainty and fought for the Empire. It became the policy of Byzantine emperors to make these tribes their subjects by "giving" them land which they could not easily withhold and getting them to fight on their side against other invaders. The Slavs were prob-

ably preferred to other hordes because they came with flocks and herds, impedimenta which served as a certain guarantee of their respectable intentions.

In this way the South Slavs started their Balkan career by forming a buffer state, a fate that has pursued them down the centuries.

Already, in the eighth century, the Teuton and Slav nations had begun the great struggle for dominion, and it looked as if the Franks under Charlemagne and his successor might extend their sway over the Balkans. The north-west corner of the Peninsula became theirs, and the Slovene lands have never since recovered their independence. They passed eventually into the hands of the Habsburg family, and became with Austria proper the nucleus of the Austrian Empire. Through all vicissitudes they have never lost their identity nor their language, and their struggle for national recognition has continued throughout the centuries of their subjection.

Early in the ninth century the Bulgarians, who had arrived in the Balkans in the seventh century, also began to become formidable. They were a Turanian tribe, who became fused with the Slavs to the extent of losing their language, though they never lost their identity. For over a century it looked as if they would subjugate the Serbs.

The Serbs were at this time loosely organised into "zadrugas" or clans, several of which formed a "zhupa" or district, ruled

over by a lord called a "zhupan." It became the custom for an assembly of zhupans to elect a Grand zhupan, who had great difficulty in enforcing over other chiefs the control which he was supposed to exercise. This want of cohesion among the zhupans, and their tendency to alienate their own people by oppression, were putting the whole race at the mercy of their enemies, just as they threatened to do ten centuries later.

The history of the next five centuries is concerned with the struggle for internal unity and national independence, threatened at every moment of weakness from Bulgaria or Constantinople, or later from Hungary.

It was in the ninth century that Christianity began to take a hold on the South Slavs, after the labours of two brothers, Constantine and Methodius, had given them a liturgy and the Gospels in their own language. These two priests were born at Salonica, and became renowned, not only as scholars, but as linguists and missionaries. On one occasion they went to Moravia, taking with them the relics of the Martyr Pope Clement I—to the "great joy of the inhabitants," with whom they remained several years. A love of relics is a marked trait of South Slav character. The Turks were aware of it, and when they devastated Serbia they brought the remains of St. Sava to Begrado, where they burnt them and dispersed them as a crowning insult to the nation. During the Serbian retreat of

1915-16, foreigners were amazed to see coffins containing holy remains being dragged along the Albanian paths behind the Metropolitan of Serbia.

To express the Slav tongue Constantine had even to invent an alphabet (glagolithic). This was afterwards brought to perfection by his disciple Clement, who called it "cyrillic" after his master Constantine, who by this time had become better known under his monastic name of Cyril. Methodius continued his missionary work long after his brother's death, and legend, unconfirmed by history, tells how he brought the message of Christianity to Prince Boris of Bulgaria.

After the schism in the Church, the Council of Salona (Split) branded the Slav missionaries as heretics, and the Slav alphabet as the invention of the devil. The alphabet question played a great part in keeping apart Serbs and Croats, the two main South Slav tribes, even as late as the nineteenth century. On the other hand, they have both clung so tenaciously to Cyril's liturgy that it is used to-day, not only in the orthodox churches, but in many Roman Catholic chapels in Dalmatia; and Croats are trying to revive it in spite of the Pope's opposition. It has been a great force in maintaining the solidarity of the South Slavs.

In the early struggle for unity the South Slavs were somewhat handicapped by having no definitely recognised centre round which

all the states could rally. When Heraclius gave land to the Serbs, the Dalmatian coast was a centre of activity. Later Rascia, in the heart of the country, became the rallying-point. The centre of interest continued to shift backwards and forwards, and from one town to another. For seven years in the beginning of the tenth century Serbia fell under the yoke of Bulgaria, and the severity of the new rule was such that the inhabitants fled to Croatia and the Greek provinces. We are told that Rascia became "one vast, gloomy, uninhabited forest." When the Serb zhupan, Chaslav, escaped from Bulgaria, where he had been imprisoned, he found only about fifty men in Rascia, who lived by the chase. There was neither a woman nor a child to be seen. He sent messengers to the Emperor of Constantinople asking for his protection, and offered such obedience as princes before him gave. Help was forthcoming, and the Serbians in the neighbouring regions flocked back to Rascia, and prosperity was restored. After the death of Chaslav, little is known of Serbia for half a century.

In the middle of the eleventh century we find Stephen Voyslav successfully resisting the attempt of Constantinople to foist imperial governors upon Serbia, and to subject them to its rapacious system of taxation. Unfortunately, internal quarrels always played havoc with the cause of Serbian unity, and fierce fighting became the order of the day.

In 1168 Manuel Comnenus, Emperor of Byzantium, placed Rascia in the hands of four brothers who belonged to a family that had been prominent in desiring peace with the empire.

The brothers fought amongst themselves, as perhaps Constantinople intended that they should; but when Stephen, the youngest, had in about a year's time asserted his supremacy over Rascia, the Empire was not quite so pleased and sent forces to quell the rising power. But Constantinople found, to her cost, that it was one thing to put a puppet on the throne of Serbia, and quite another to get him to remain a puppet. After shaking himself free from the last vestige of Byzantine suzerainty, Stephen gradually extended his sway southwards as far as Nish, and westwards over Herzegovina and part of Dalmatia. He tried to consolidate his power by the arts of diplomacy as well as by war. To protect himself in the north he maintained friendly relations with the Ban of Bosnia, and he formed alliances with Hungary and Bulgaria.

Thus began the great Nemanya dynasty—just about the time that Henry II and Thomas à Becket were quarrelling in England.

The deep religious sense of members of the dynasty endeared them to their people, and helped to unite the State. The first Nemanya was a Christian not only for reasons of expediency, but also by conviction, and he brought up his children in a religious atmosphere

which did much to shape the religious destinies of the nation. Rastko, his third son, shared his father's enthusiasm, and felt himself called to the service of God. Religious as he was, Stephen had other views for his brilliant son. He gave him a province to rule—there was talk of finding him a wife. But Rastko's fate awaited him in the "forest cloisters" of Mount Athos, the "Holy Mountain" of the Serbs, on a little peninsula running out into the *Ægean*. At the time it was a great centre of religious and literary life. Thence there came one day to Stephen's court "caloyers" (orthodox monks) asking alms. They were well received. By them Rastko was fired with enthusiasm for a monastic life, and, when they went, he left the court to join them—in secret, knowing he would never get his father's consent to a life that seemed to mean worldly extinction. The Prince, when he heard what had happened, sent messengers to bring back Rastko; but Rastko took the vows immediately after their arrival, and came to them in monk's garb, saying he was no longer Rastko, but the monk, Sava. He gave them his worldly garments to take back with them, and sent a message to his father saying he expected to see him too one day at Mount Athos.

As the years passed the old Prince longed for his son, and in 1196 he called together his lords and formally abdicated, reminding them that he had found the country in chaos and

left it strong and united. Then in the white marble church of Studenitzza, which he himself had built, he gave up the world to become a monk, showing his people in a practical way his belief in the vanity of earthly pomp. Two years later he went to Mount Athos, accompanied by some of his faithful lords. The Prince's influence revived the patriot in Sava. From this time he took an intense interest in the affairs of his native country, and his statesmanship piloted it through many difficulties.

At this epoch it was usual for the great to do good works for the salvation of their souls. In Serbia the making of roads and the building of bridges, hostelries, churches and monasteries came under this category, and while the Nemanyas reigned an astonishing number of churches sprang up all over the country. Among those built by the first Stephen is that of Gjurgjevi Stupovi, which stands on a hill near Novi Pazar. It is especially interesting because it contains a portrait of the founder, holding the model of the church. It is minutely described by Miss Irby, who travelled in Serbia in the 'seventies. "There, too," she says, "is his son and coadjutor, St. Sava, depicted with a long fair beard; also his patron, St. George, with the dragon. . . . It is one of the oldest specimens of Serbian architecture, and it is also one of the most simple, the large dome in the centre reminding one of those island churches (in

Venice) which look like bubbles blown up from the sea. . . ." The walls of a small outer chapel, belonging to a century later, "are covered with frescoes, of which the colours are still in part fresh and the inscriptions legible . . . portraits of the Nemanyid family in long gem-embroidered garments, and with glories round their heads." These pictures give one a good idea of the gala dress of the time. From Dushan's Code we gather that it was usual for every lord to have a costume adorned with pearls and a golden belt, which were the heirlooms of the family.

Stephen Nemanya, as brother Simeon, spent his last days rebuilding the old Greek monastery of Hilendar at Mount Athos, which he destined to be a centre of Serbian religious life. He died in 1199, the same year that Richard Cœur de Lion, King of England, was killed seeking more material treasure. It is worthy of note that Richard's name has gone down in Balkan tradition as the founder of the beautiful cathedral of Santa Maria at Ragusa (Dubrovnik), which was destroyed later by an earthquake. Legend says that the English King, overtaken by a storm near Corfu when returning from Palestine, made a vow to found a church wherever he was able to land. After tossing about for several days, he landed on the island of Lacroma, near Ragusa, and, at the request of the Ragusans, built the church in their town.

When one compares the influences of the Roman, Serbian and Turkish rules over this

part of Europe, one cannot but be struck by the few monuments of constructive genius that mark the Roman and Turkish occupation, whereas over one hundred monasteries and numbers of churches tell of Serbian religious activity, which of course meant social and intellectual activity, belonging to the time when the country was governed by its own people. At first the architecture was inspired chiefly by Byzantine models, then by Roman, later again by Byzantine; but these models were modified in a way that shows the original genius of the Slav, more especially in the latest period before the fall. This original tendency is common to both Serbia proper and Dalmatia, which developed politically upon somewhat different lines. Meshtrovitch, the young Yugoslav sculptor of Dalmatia, in a recent letter writes: "Many of the churches in Dalmatia, at the period of independent architecture, are in the Byzantine style, just as there are monasteries in old Serbia in the Roman style . . . but in both there is in addition a true and original Slav spirit. In Dalmatia we had great artists . . . they learned from the Italians and from those from whom the Italians in their turn learned; what is original in their work is Slav." The Yugoslavs had a love of all that was highly decorative, and we know that St. Sava journeyed far and wide in Asia Minor in search of ornaments, and also of relics, with which to make Serbian churches an object of pilgrimage.

CHAPTER II**THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN EMPIRE**

STEPHEN's two eldest sons quarrelled over the succession. The old prince had appointed his second son Stephen as successor to the bulk of his dominions. His eldest son, Vukan, to whom he had already before his abdication given his Adriatic provinces, was angry at being passed over, and allied himself with Hungary against his brother. Sava, however, succeeded in reconciling Stephen and Vukan when he went to Serbia with his father's remains, which were buried at Studenitza.

At this time several circumstances combined to give the young Serbian State a chance of growth—especially the quarrels between her neighbours. The Eastern and Western Churches were bitter rivals. Rome intrigued continually against Constantinople, Hungary on several occasions acting as her tool. Venice threw covetous eyes upon her rival ports, and under the cloak of religion diverted the attention of the fourth crusade from Palestine to Zadar (Zara) and Constantinople. Said Doge Dandolo to the Crusaders assembled at Venice: “The King of Hungary has taken from us Zara, in Sclavonia, one of the strongest places in the world, nor shall we ever recover it except by the assistance of the Crusaders.”

Thus began the process of degeneration that turned a holy war into a plundering expedition. The Crusaders, many of whom had joined the party from motives that had little to do with religion, were willing to give their services, and Zadar fell in 1202. Then, their appetite for conquest and pillage whetted, they proceeded to Constantinople, holding out to the Pope the pleasing prospect of bringing it back to the Catholic fold. It was taken after hard fighting, and "the plunder exceeded all that had been witnessed since the creation of the world." The Crusaders even robbed the tombs of the Emperors, and destroyed incomparable works of art.

Western princes ruled in Constantinople for about sixty years, and the general effect of the occupation was that Byzantium was so materially weakened by the struggle, losing both territory and trade, that it never recovered from it, and hatred of Rome and the West became, so to speak, popularised in Constantinople. Later, face to face with Turkish invasion, the sentiment of the people was, "Better the turban of the Turk in Constantinople than the Pope's tiara."

The particular influence of the Crusade on ecclesiastical affairs in Serbia is worth mentioning. For a time it seemed as if the Church of Constantinople were going to lose its independence. Accordingly Stephen II, in 1217, sought the royal title from Rome. Sava did not approve of this temporising, and

determined to abide by the faith of his fathers. In 1219 he persuaded the Patriarch of Nicea to grant religious autonomy to Serbia, and he himself became first archbishop. It was under these changed circumstances, according to tradition, that Stephen was crowned king, his brother performing the ceremony before a large concourse of people, and declaring him to be the first crowned king of Serbia. These episodes are, however, wrapt in obscurity owing to the rival claims of Orthodox and Roman Catholic bigots, who would both like to claim the first crowned king of Serbia as their own.

The archiepiscopal see was first of all fixed at Zhicha, but in 1253 was transferred to Petch (Ipek) in Old Serbia. Serbia kept her religious autonomy till the eighteenth century, except for an important break at the beginning of the Turkish occupation. This fact is of great importance. It was chiefly her Church, her one national institution under the Turks, that kept alive Serbia's sense of nationality through all the crushing years of her servitude.

Stephen the First Crowned died in 1227, and three of his sons reigned in turn. Under them and under his grandson King Milutin the State expanded to the east and the west and the south, and made rapid strides in commerce, legislation and education. Marriage alliances were contracted with French, Hungarian and Greek princesses, and we learn that Helène

of France took a great interest in all public works, and herself superintended the education of the daughters of nobles in a convent near the court. The rich mines of the country also began to be exploited about this time.

Milutin's reign is noteworthy as the first in which Serbian forces met the Turks, who were now establishing themselves in Asia Minor. The Byzantine Emperor implored Milutin's help against them, and to seal their friendship the Serbian King was married with great pomp to the Emperor's daughter Simonide. A Serbian army then crossed to Asia and drove back the Turks. The portraits of Milutin and his Greek bride may be seen to-day at the beautiful church of Grachanitzza which he founded on the east side of the plain of Kossovo.

In 1330, in the reign of Milutin's son Stephen, the Serbs gained a great victory over the Bulgarians at Kustendil, and the Bulgarian Tzar was killed in the battle. As a thank-offering Stephen built the famous monastery of Dechani, from which he is called Stephen Dechanski. The reign of Milutin's grandson, the celebrated Dushan, began in the next year, 1331, at the time that Edward III reigned in England, and it is the most glorious in Serbian history. At his accession the kingdom comprised all the lands of the Serbs except Bosnia, ruled by a Ban, the Republic of Dubrovnik (Ragusa), and certain Hungarian territories. Before he died, in 1355, he

had added to it part of Bosnia, Beograd (Belgrade), and much of the territory of the Eastern Empire. He was also called Emperor of the "Romans" (=Greeks), and recognised as suzerain of part of Bulgaria, while the proud and cultured Dubrovnik owned him as protector.

Dushan was undoubtedly a military genius. In his father's reign he had distinguished himself against the Bulgarians at Kustendil, and tradition says it was he who on that occasion killed the Bulgarian Tzar. On coming to the throne he tried to pacify that country by marrying the new Tzar's sister. His campaigns were conducted with such fury that Byzantine chroniclers liken their progress to that of a raging torrent or a devastating fire. His soldiers would follow him anywhere; his enemies fled before him. His name to this day is an inspiration to the Serbs. Modern gymnastic societies in Serbia are called "Dushan Silni" (Dushan the Mighty). When the Serbians marched from Beograd against the Bulgarians in 1885, it was with the song "Chuj Dushane" on their lips—

"Listen, Dushan, the army asks for thee;
Arise, O Tzar, from out thy grave,
And free thy land."

Amongst Dushan's early conquests were a great part of Albania, Epirus and Macedonia. His ambitions grew with continued success, and it is said that he dreamed of giving the

Byzantine Empire its *coup de grâce*, and founding a Græco-Serbian State on its ruins. Circumstances favoured the plan. The Eastern Empire was torn with internal dissensions, consequent upon the minority of John Palæologos. John Cantacuzenus, the Regent, tried to secure the throne for himself, and finding little encouragement in his own country, came to the court of Dushan to seek his alliance. He was received with great hospitality, and was much impressed with the magnificence of Dushan's surroundings. The alliance of Dushan and Cantacuzenus was short lived, and the Byzantine pretender contributed materially to the misfortunes of the Balkans by forming an alliance with the Turks, cemented by the marriage of his daughter with Orkhan.

Meanwhile, in 1346, after a second successful campaign in Macedonia, Dushan proclaimed himself Tzar of Serbs and Greeks. He also raised the Archbishopric of Petch to the status of a Patriarchate to correspond with his own new dignity, and was crowned anew at Skoplye (Uskub) in the presence of the Patriarchs of Serbia and Bulgaria, and a large concourse of clergy and nobles.

Dushan then proceeded to organise his State. The experience of the past had taught him the necessity of internal administration as well as conquest, and he devoted much time to questions of legislation. His famous Code was brought before an assembly at Skoplye in 1349, and completed several years later.

It is one of the most remarkable Slav documents of the Middle Ages, and throws much light on the state of society in medieval Serbia. It will be seen that Serbia, to-day one of the most advanced of democratic nations, was in the Middle Ages more feudal than the West. The Code must be contrasted rather than compared with our own Magna Carta of more than a century earlier, and bears closer resemblance to contemporary French Codes. It did not declare every man to be equal before the law. There was a privileged class of lords and clergy, and a non-privileged class. The Church was protected in every way, but heavy penalties were inflicted on clergy who got their livings by money, and monasteries were bound to feed the poor according to the wishes of their founders. Many articles aimed at the suppression of heresy, and one dealt with the practice of digging up dead people suspected of being vampires.

Particularly interesting are the clauses dealing with the Emperor, who tried to set an example in respecting other people's rights. He denied having any right to interfere with the possessions of his lords, or with charters of towns; and judges were to dispense justice regardless of his wishes. Landowners owed military service to the Emperor, and they were, under certain circumstances, responsible for brigandage in their territories. Margraves had to pay for damage done by marauding

bands if they came and went across their lands. Terrible vengeance was meted out to robbers, and to villages and their elders for harbouring them. Guards were placed along the roads to protect travellers, who were to be treated well wherever they went. Trade was to be in every way facilitated. People were forbidden to assemble, under heavy penalties. This clause is generally regarded as a measure to suppress political organisation; but it is more likely that it aimed at the bands of robbers that congregated in the forests. There were judges and assizes to administer justice, and juries that varied in size according to the gravity of the case dealt with. No relation or enemy of the accused was allowed to serve on these juries, and if they were afterwards proved to have given a wrong decision they were punished. Trials by ordeal were also in vogue for the common people as in England in Saxon times.

This Code was a collection of laws and customs already in existence, revised by the Emperor. The clerical work it entailed was done by the logothet, or chancellor, and the Sabor, or assembly of clergy and nobles, acted as advisers. Their ratification of the Code was probably a mere matter of form, all legislative power belonging to the Emperor. Nevertheless, we see in the clauses by which the Emperor limited his own powers, and declared the independence of the law, the embryonic recognition of the rights of the people.

There was one great weakness in the Code which probably undermined the strength of the Empire. The system was perpetuated of dividing the country into provinces under powerful lords, who became independent as soon as any weakness showed itself at the head of the Government.

As long as Dushan was alive all went well with Serbia. He conquered several more Greek provinces; and soon all that was left to Constantinople of the Balkans was Thrace and Salonica. It became a question whether the Turks or the Serbians would get Constantinople first. To add to that city's misfortune, her sea power, upon which she partly depended to repel the Turks, received a crushing blow from the Genoese. The situation was complicated by Roman Catholic Hungary, incited continually by the Pope to weaken the power of Orthodox countries, including Serbia, with a view to the salvation of their souls.

When the Turks crossed the Dardanelles and established themselves at Gallipoli (1354), Christendom at last seemed to awaken to the peril of the situation. An attempt was made to unite the Byzantine Empire, the Hungarians, and the Slavs, against the invaders. It is said that Dushan even offered to become a Roman Catholic if he could be captain of the combined armies. His object was possibly to prevent any question of the Hungarians attacking him in the rear.

While Christendom hesitated in mutual distrust as to what course to pursue, Dushan decided to take strong measures without delay, and marched with an army of 80,000 Serbs towards Constantinople, feeling that the only way to safety was to establish himself there. He was near Adrianople when he was taken suddenly ill, and died. This was the year that the Black Prince was ravaging the southern provinces of France. It was before English literature had dawned in the person of Chaucer.

The death of Dushan marked the end of the Serbian greatness, and was the worst calamity that could have befallen the Balkans.

The State had grown too rapidly: only time combined with fortunate circumstances, such as might have existed under a strong ruler like Dushan, could have saved it from disaster. Now, the very circumstance that had contributed to the rise of Serbia—the weakness of Constantinople—helped to bring about her fall. She had to bear an undue share of the great struggle which followed between the Cross and the Crescent.

CHAPTER III

THE FALL OF SERBIA

It was in 1355 that Dushan died, Emperor of Serbs, Greeks and Albanians. It is said

that on his deathbed he made his chiefs swear allegiance to his young son Urosh; but legend tells that great confusion arose as to the question of a successor. The prince's three uncles, one of whom was Vukashin, each claimed the throne, and Vukashin's son Marko, who is said to have acted as secretary to the Emperor, was declared to be the only person who knew his dying wishes. He was sent for. Marko, "who feared no one but God," declared that Urosh was the rightful heir, although his own interests were bound up with his father's succession.

Thus, at the most critical moment in the nation's history, a minor came to the throne. The dismemberment of the Empire began almost immediately. Urosh was weak and pacific, and vassal states, like Albania and Bulgaria, soon freed themselves from the central power, while great chieftains became independent princes in their own provinces. Some of the worst enemies of the young Emperor were his own relations, more especially his uncles, Vukashin and Ugliasha. Vukashin succeeded in establishing himself as king of the southern half of Serbia (Macedonia) in 1366, and Ugliasha became all-powerful in the district of Drama. Soon all that was left to Urosh of Dushan's Empire was a district south-east of Kara-Dagh, and even from there he was forced to flee to Bosnia. The history of his last years is wrapt in obscurity.

Serbia's mighty neighbours were not slow

to take advantage of her internal dissensions, and while the Turks advanced from the East, seizing Adrianople, and defeating the Balkan Christian armies at the first battle of Chernomen (1363), the Hungarians, under their ambitious King Lewis, advanced repeatedly from the north, taking possession of much of Bosnia (1359), and of Beograd (1365). Their concentration against Bulgaria in the years that followed met with fierce resistance from combined forces of Serbs, Bulgarians and Wallachians, but their 1370 campaign established their dominion along the Danube. This invasion of Bulgaria assumed the nature of a crusade, and many of its inhabitants were forcibly rebaptised. By their treatment of the Christian people in the Balkans the Hungarians contributed largely to the success of the Turkish invasion of Europe.

In 1371 Vukashin and Uglesha made a united effort to stem the tide of that invasion, and gathered together no fewer than 60,000 soldiers. They were, however, surprised on the Maritza, and both were killed. A glance at the map will show the importance of this second battle of Chernomen. There are in the Balkans four river courses of pre-eminent strategic value. The Maritza leads into the heart of the country from the south-east, the Vardar from the south and the Ægean, the Morava from the north. The Danube, from time immemorial, brought invasion from the north and from the east. The first great line of defence

against the Turks was lost at the battle of Maritza. The next fighting would inevitably be in the heart of Serbia, the next along the Morava, the next round the Danube fortresses.

The year 1371 marks an epoch in a double sense, for Urosh, the last of the direct line of the Nemanyas, died that year. The old era ended and the new began. A certain twilight glory, however, still remained to the South Slav race. A kinsman of the Nemanyas, Tvrtko, had made himself master of Bosnia, and became one of its greatest rulers, extending his sway over Herzegovina, part of Dalmatia, and Rascia. In 1377 he had himself crowned at the tomb of St. Sava at the monastery of Mileshevo in Herzegovina, with the title of King of Serbia, Bosnia, and the Sea Coast.

Meanwhile, Vukashin being dead, the lords and clergy of the southern Serbian kingdom chose as their king one of Dushan's lords, Lazar Greblyanovitch, whose wife, Militza, was a Nemanya.

A cycle of legends has sprung into being about these dramatic times, but of all the men who played a part in the tragedy of Serbia's downfall, none is such a popular hero as Marko, son of Vukashin. Legend tells how his mother, tired of washing blood-stained shirts, prayed him to leave off fighting. He therefore took to ploughing, not the fields, but the roads along which the Turks carried on their trade. The Turkish mer-

chants attacked him, but he killed them with his plough, and took their gold and brought it to his mother. "There, dear mother," he said, "is what I have ploughed for you to-day!" This is a picturesque way of expressing that the followers of peaceful avocations were necessarily turned into warriors by Turkish conditions. History gives various versions of Marko's sphere of influence, but most legends connect him with the castle of Prilip, in Western Macedonia, which fell into the hands of the Turks soon after the accession of Lazar. Marko was certainly a vassal of the Turks, and he evidently fought in their battles. Legend, which has often proved true in the case of Serbia, describes Marko's horror at being called upon to fight against the Christian Romans: "O God," cried he, "do Thou this day destroy all those who fight against Christendom, and foremost Marko."

To Serbians Marko is a symbol of their own unhappy fate. He was bound by an oath to a foreign allegiance. He could not at the same time be loyal to his suzerain and to his own people, and death seemed to be the only way of escape from his conflicting duties. Thousands of Austrian Serbs in the present war have been in the terrible position of Marko.

Serbians have ascribed supernatural powers to Marko. They believed that he never died, but only slept till the day of destiny should

arrive when Serbia would again need a leader to make her a free people.

Meanwhile, Marko's fate threatened Lazar, and he and Tvrtko lived in concord, knowing the dangers of quarrelling. Lazar was preparing for another great effort against the Turks. Christendom seemed to be waking more and more to the meaning of the storm in the East. The Pope was loud in his lamentations. But the quarrels between the Greek and Serbian Churches on the one hand, and the Orthodox and Catholic Churches on the other, made concerted action impossible. Moreover, the crusading spirit was dead. Venice took advantage of Balkan difficulties to establish herself more firmly along the eastern coast of the Adriatic, and Hungary thought the moment a propitious one for attacking Serbia (1374). She was successfully repulsed, but the Serbs were weakened by the fighting. The common danger succeeded in uniting Serbia, Bosnia and Albania, and a combined army of Serbs and Albanians inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Turks in the mountain fastnesses of Montenegro. Sultan Murad, one of the greatest generals of his day, was at the moment celebrating his marriage in Asia Minor. When he heard the news, he vowed vengeance, and after assembling a huge army he marched into Serbia. Lazar met him with a combined army of Serbs and Bosnians on the plain of Kossovo (the field of blackbirds), in June, 1389.

This plain, the bed of an ancient lake, lies in the very heart of Serbia, near the sources of the Morava and Vardar. Through it run some of the great highways of Serbia, which approach it through the narrow passes of the mountains which surround it. Again and again in Serbian history we read of battles being fought here, and it was on this spot that the fate of the nation was sealed. On the eve of the battle, according to legend, the leaders on both sides were conscious of the momentous nature of the coming struggle, and were overwhelmed with fears. Murad even thought of not giving battle, till he was assured in a dream that "victory would follow his arms against the infidels." Lazar had a vision of a different nature: he was asked to choose between a heavenly and an earthly crown, and chose a heavenly one. Gloom seems to have enveloped the Serbian camp. According to tradition the rivalries of Lazar's two sons-in-law, Milosh Obilitch and Vuk Brankovitch, had brought dissension. Lazar was warned of treachery and accused the faithful Milosh. Milosh, stung by the insult, and determined to vindicate his good name, departed to the Turkish camp, and, on the plea of being a traitor to the Serbs, gained admittance to Murad. As he knelt down according to custom to kiss his feet, he plunged his dagger into him. Murad fell mortally wounded, but seems to have directed operations till the last.

There are many different versions of the battle that followed. At first the day went well for the Serbs: then Vuk Brankovitch, the real traitor, rode away from the field of battle. He was followed by 12,000 men, who imagined the movement to be part of Lazar's strategy. Then Lazar's horse was hit and fell under his rider, and had to be led off the field. Its disappearance started the rumour that Lazar was dead. Panic seized the army. The day was lost for the Serbs.

Lazar, according to some, was slain on the field of battle, where also fell his brothers-in-law, the nine Yugovitch brothers, with their old father Bogdan, and the flower of Serbian nobility. According to other accounts he was taken prisoner and beheaded before the dying Murad, who lived long enough to see the triumph of his forces. Legend, with poetic licence perhaps, represents Obilitch as a prisoner of the Turks confronting Lazar, who before his death learnt the faithfulness of his son-in-law. Certain it is that Obilitch met his death at the hands of the Turks, but it is more likely that he was cut down at the moment he struck Murad, as other versions relate. From this time dates a well-known Turkish custom: when a stranger visits the Sultan, a faithful servant walks on either side holding his hands.

Bayazet, Murad's son, to prevent any difficulties about succeeding his father, ordered the death of his brother Yacub, who had commanded one of the wings of the Turkish army.

His hasty departure from the field of battle to make good his claim to the throne led to the belief, in Western Europe, that he had lost the battle, and joy-bells were rung at Notre Dame of Paris.

Vuk Brankovitch was not rewarded for his treachery. Indeed, the silence of Turkish chronicles about the part he is supposed to have played in the day's events has led modern historians to exonerate him from the charge of bad faith, and to attribute his defection to cowardice.

Bayazet thought it worth while to win such hard fighters as the Serbians to his side, and in the negotiations which followed he made the following stipulations: Stephen, Lazar's son, was to rule Serbia as his vassal, but was to follow him on his military expeditions, and provide soldiers for his army. He was also to pay tribute from Serbian silver mines. A marriage alliance cemented the treaty: Mileva, Stephen's sister, became the wife of Bayazet.

For about seventy years longer Serbia enjoyed a semi-independence, the scene of her last struggles shifting to Shumadia and Beograd. The battle of Kossovo was a great disaster for the Serbs, but the Turks had lost heavily too, and all might have been well if the Christians of the West and of neighbouring states had come to the aid of the Balkan peoples instead of taking advantage of their difficulties. . . .

The more independent spirits of Serbia retired to Montenegro, or passed over the frontiers to Bosnia and Hungary. To this day mourning for Kossovo is worn in Montenegro, and wailing is heard, as though for a relative newly dead. "Things are so hard for us, hard since Kossovo," is a remark still heard on the lips of the people. All down the centuries of Turkish oppression the anniversary of Kossovo has been observed as a national day by the Serbs, a reminder of the freedom that once was theirs, and which they believed would be theirs again; and the shrine of Saint Lazar and even that of Murad are still objects of reverent pilgrimage. So strong is the feeling that even the enemies of that fateful day are holy, that the Serbs, on capturing the plain of Kossovo in 1912, placed a guard of honour by the grave of Murad.

Stephen was loyal to his oath of allegiance, and fought on the side of the Turks against Bosnians, Bulgarians, and Wallachians. The Wallachians were defeated at the battle of Rovina, where Marko is said to have died. Then Stephen was called upon to help against the Hungarians, who now began to suffer the nemesis of their former treachery towards the Serbs. Even with the enemy at his doors, Sigismund, their king, failed to realise his position. He had the Pope and the Western Empire to rely on, and commanded the help of some of the bravest knights of Germany and France. His army was full of confidence,

and its leaders boasted that if the sky fell they would hold it up on their lances. The two forces met at Nicopolis. Schiltberger, a German who fought on the side of the Hungarians, tells us that differences arose between them and the French, but that nevertheless the day was going well for the Christian Allies, and the Sultan was about to flee, when the "despot" of Rascia (Stephen of Serbia) went to his assistance with 15,000 men, and turned the tide of battle in favour of the Turks. After this victory it was Bayazet's turn to become boastful, and he "threatened that he would bèsiege Buda, the Hungarian capital: that he would subdue the adjacent countries of Germany and Italy; and that he would feed his horse with a bushel of oats on the altar of St. Peter's at Rome. His progress was checked . . . by a long and painful fit of the gout."

In 1402 we find Stephen and the Brankovitch brothers fighting at the battle of Angora, where Bayazet met the famous Mogul Emperor Tamerlane.

Stephen followed the example of Dushan in trying to strengthen the State from within. He toured the country with a view to uniting the people, and improved its administration. By peaceful negotiation with Hungary he secured Beograd, the "white city" on the Danube, which had hitherto rarely been in the hands of the Serbians. He fortified it, and made it his capital. Stephen was of a

deeply religious nature, probably inherited from his mother, Militza. Like the Neman-yas, he delighted in building churches and monasteries. After the death of his mother as a nun, his life became more decidedly monastic than before. He banished gaiety and music from his court, and gave much time to almsgiving and prayer. Had he lived in less troublous times his name might have gone down to posterity as one of Serbia's most remarkable rulers. He had the gentle impulses that make a reign a success in time of peace. He was loyal in his undertakings, ready to forgive wrongs; his private life was irreproachable. But he had not the iron nerve and absence of scruple that make a conqueror. His very qualities brought him trouble. His brother Vuk and nephew George Brankovitch knew they could conspire against him with impunity.

In 1427 Stephen died without issue, and his last act showed the forgiving spirit that had been a marked feature of his life. He nominated as his heir George Brankovitch, with the approval of Hungary, which had at this time some sort of lordship over Serbia.

George Brankovitch's reign was one scene of struggle against the Turks, centring chiefly round the fortresses of Beograd and Smederevo (Semendria). It became evident that the riches of Hungary were the main objective of the Turks, and the conquest of Serbia was merely a preliminary. The Sultan, Amurath

(Murad) II, first tried to get the throne of Serbia by right of succession, as the grandson of Bayazet and Mileva, sister of Stephen. Not being successful in pushing the claim either by persuasion or by force of arms, he contented himself with marrying Mara, George Brankovitch's daughter. George Brankovitch refused his request to cede to him the fortress of Smederevo as a *point d'appui* against Hungary. Instead he ceded Beograd to the Hungarians, who asked for this fortress as vital to their power of resistance. In exchange he received a number of fortresses within the Hungarian dominions which would afford a shelter to Serbians if they had to leave their country. However, while George Brankovitch was away making terms with Hungary, Smederevo fell to the Turks. Later he proceeded to the great sanctuary of refugees, Dubrovnik—"with all his treasure," as an inscription on one of its gateways attests to this day. Serbia had to bear the penalty of the sins of Hungary. The forces of Turkey met those of John Hunyády on Serbian territory, and the land was devastated. Inevitably the Serbians became involved in the warfare, and Beograd and Smederevo were soon in a state of perennial siege. The fall of Constantinople in 1453 sealed the fate of the Balkans. The Serbians realised that they were doomed. Only Western help could save them, and it was not forthcoming.

In 1456 George Brankovitch died at Smede-

revo at the age of ninety-one, and his youngest son, Lazar, who seized the throne, did not long survive him. Lazar's Greek widow, Yerina, in a last desperate effort to keep the country for her daughters, offered to hold it as a fief from the Pope. In Serbia it was now a question of choosing between Papal and Turkish rule. An old song tells how George Brankovitch once asked John Hunyády what Hungary would do with Serbia if their arms were victorious against the Turks: "You must go to Rome to implore the Pope's blessing," was the answer. He then asked the Sultan a similar question: "By every mosque," said the Sultan, "there will be a church, and every one will be free to prostrate himself in the one or cross himself in the other." The Serbs, between the devil and the deep sea, preferred the pretended tolerance of the Turks to Christian persecution.

Resistance slackened, and in 1459 Serbia became a Pashalik, and 200,000 of her inhabitants were carried into slavery. Over her humiliated land the Turks marched to further conquest. The resistance of Bosnia was slight. It came into the power of the Turks in 1463, many of its influential families embracing the Mohammedan religion. Thus the way was clear for attacking Hungary.

On looking back over the hundred years that separated Serbia's day of glory from that of her humiliation, the foremost reason of her downfall stands out: the Turks were a vast

organised force, and their military system was such that it absorbed the fighting capacity of the states they subdued. The new blood consolidated their power—the subdued nations riveted their own chains. In Europe there was no such organisation to meet it, and it was impossible to improvise one, not so much on account of the egoism of the rival states as because of the fanaticism of the rival churches.

That the Balkan people, rather than any other, should have fallen, was purely and simply a question of geography.

CHAPTER IV

THE SERBS DURING THE TURKISH OCCUPATION OF SERBIA

IT must be peculiarly exasperating to Serbs of modern times to read the European history of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. While their own country had gone under in the Eastern struggle, the West was free to develop and crystallise, forgetful of the nation that barred the way of Turkish invasion, and to which it largely owed its immunity. Serbia entered a night of political annihilation. The West saw the dawn of a glorious day—an intellectual and moral awakening, partly produced by the teaching of refugee scholars

from Constantinople. What might so easily have been the heritage of the Balkans became the property of the West, and developed civilisations rivalling those of the great days of Greece and Rome. England produced thinkers—among them her Shakespeare. The new life that stirred the country laid the foundations of her world empire.

Meanwhile, from that birthright of all nations, the stored knowledge of all times, Serbia was shut away, her people condemned to manual labour only, without schools to inform their minds, without the culture that glorifies toil. Yet the vital spark of the nation remained alive, and the agony of Serbia gave it a literature, not one written in books, but one sung to the accompaniment of the *gusla* by the country people after the day's task. It tells about the struggle after the death of Dushan, and all the details of these events are known to the peasantry to-day, as English history is unknown in England.

The history of the Serbs after the fall of Serbia was like that of a dammed river, forcing ways for itself where it would under other circumstances never have sought them. Some Serbs stayed in their own country, and some crossed the frontiers in various directions, principally to Hungary. Meanwhile, the tide of Turkish invasion swept north and west. After Serbia and Bosnia came the downfall of Albania, heroically defended by Scanderbeg; of Herzegovina; and the nominal surrender

of Montenegro in 1499. The little Slav Republic of Dubrovnik (Ragusa) alone maintained its independence.

The fate of the people in the different Balkan States varied. The Bosnian nobles protected themselves by becoming Moham-medans. Many Albanians did the same, and fought in the Turkish armies with the frenzy of the newly converted. The new Turk is more Turk than the old Turk, says a Serbian proverb. The Serbs of Serbia, occupying the valleys of the Morava and Vardar, through which the Turks marched to their incessant campaigns against Hungary, endured all that was harshest in Turkish rule. Not a trace of independence remained to them. Their nobles were replaced by Turkish spahi (cavalry), who were thus rewarded for their military service. They farmed the revenues of the land without actually owning it. The people of the country were subjected to taxation and forced labour. There was a poll tax for the right of being in the world, a marriage tax, a tithe (sometimes amounting to a fifth or a third) on the produce of fields, vineyards, beehives, etc.; there was backsheesh for the tax gatherers, there was personal service to the Sultan, or his representative; personal service to the spahi; personal service to any Turk who came along the road and demanded it. Worst of all exactions was the tribute of youths to be given every five years for military service. They were taken away from their

homes to be enrolled among the Turkish "janissaries," and were brought up in the Mohammedan religion. Thus the young hope of the nation went to swell the ranks of the Turks, and were used to crush the very nation from which they had sprung. Moreover, all relations between rulers and ruled were accompanied by the petty humiliations that crush a proud people. Serbian houses must not overtop those of Turks, church bells must not be heard. If a Serb met a Turk on the road, he must dismount, otherwise he might be killed. "To suffer was his duty, to resist a crime." "Justice" was administered by a kadi, but no unbeliever was allowed to be a witness against a believer. Resistance was rendered impossible by the simple expedient of disarming the people. One is not surprised to read that a traveller in the sixteenth century describes the Serbs as "poor, miserable captives, none of whom dare lift up his head." Lady Mary Montague, writing in 1717 on her way to Constantinople, says, "We crossed the deserts of Servia, almost quite overgrown, though a country naturally fertile, and inhabitants industrious; but the oppression of the peasants is so great they are forced to abandon their houses and neglect their tillage, all they have being a prey to the janissaries, whenever they please to seize upon it. We had a guard of five hundred of them, and I was almost in tears every day to see their insolencies in the poor villages through

which we passed. . . . When the Pachas travel it is yet worse. Those oppressors are not content with eating all that is to be eaten belonging to the peasants. They have the impudence to exact 'teeth money,' a contribution for the use of their teeth worn with the honour of devouring their meat."

Except for the janissaries, there was little attempt at converting Serbians to the Mohammedan religion. It suited the purposes of the Turks to have a military caste of believers to be served by a subject class of unbelievers. Texts from the Koran conveniently expressed their views. "The world belongeth to God—He giveth to whom he will." God gave Serbia to them. Concerning the treatment of unbelievers it taught: "Oppress them till they pay poll tax, and are humbled." As for converting, "thou wilt not find any means of enlightening him whom God has given over to error." For this reason the Serbs continued to be free to worship as they chose, and after about a hundred years of national and religious chaos, owing to the suspension of their national Church, the Patriarchate of Petch was revived in 1557. In their Church their wounded national feelings found compensation for their political annihilation. It became to them a symbol of national unity, and the churchyard became their political meeting-ground, where a knowledge of their history and their national aspirations was passed on from generation to generation without arousing

the suspicions of the Turks. It was not by chance that the standard of rebellion, in the early nineteenth century, was raised outside the churches.

Among the Serbs who remained in Serbia there were some who were not content to bend beneath the yoke. They became haiduks, or brigands, and lived by plundering the Turks on their trade routes in the summer, and were housed and hidden by sympathisers in the winter. Many national poems sing of their prowess, and the respect they commanded is explained by the peculiar state of affairs which made the outlaw more moral than the law, as in the legendary days of our own Robin Hood. Serbian children still listen wide-eyed to tales of these heroes, whose daring in entering towns where a price was offered for their heads, commanded the respect even of their enemies. Similar bands, called Uskoks, lived also in Dalmatia and Croatia, by the Adriatic, and maintained themselves by filibustering expeditions. Both were the champions of the poor, who loved them, and the terror of Turkish oppressors and of unpatriotic Serbs. To robbers it was thus given to cherish the vital spark of a nation's liberties, and their sense of honour was such that no torture could wring from them the names of their confederates or the friends who sheltered them. Their chivalry was proverbial, and was extended even to the poor Turk. The comitadji of Macedonia to-day bears some resemblance to

the haiduk of old, with fewer of his virtues and more of his vices.

To a great extent the Serbian nation transplanted itself after the Turkish occupation. The blind Stephen Brankovitch was among the first to lead a colony to Hungary, and in time its southern provinces came to be mainly occupied by Serbs. There we hear of Brankovitches as "voivodes" (Serbian leaders) till the end of the seventeenth century. In Hungary, the history of Serbia was largely repeated. First, there was a strong king, Matthias Corvinus, the son of John Hunyády, who organised a military force. His famous Black Legion was mainly formed of Serbs, and it kept the Turks at bay for a long time. After his death came chaos, internal dissensions at least as great as there had been in Serbia, and a lack of patriotism such as had not been known there. But Hungary was never subjugated in the sense that Serbia was, partly because she had the Serbs as a bulwark in front of her, fighting with the desperation of men who have lost their country, and behind her the greatest European empire since the Cæsars.

In her turn, Austria treated Hungary much as Hungary treated Serbia. It was across a prostrate Hungary, and when she herself was threatened, that Austria marched against the Turks. Hungary, to a certain extent, precipitated the trouble. Sultan Selim had vowed that he would build mosques at Jerusalem,

Buda and Rome, and they did not take warning. When Selim died, his vow unfulfilled, they mutilated the envoy of his successor, who had been sent to the Hungarian Court on a friendly errand. Soleyman determined to avenge the insult, and Beograd fell before his armed forces. The battle of Mohács (1526) was the Hungarian Kossovo. The Hungarian king was killed, and, as a result of the defeat, Buda became the capital of a pashalik. In a desperate effort to save the rest of their territory, the Hungarians chose Ferdinand, Archduke of Austria, as their sovereign. This alliance of Austria and what remained of Hungary infuriated the Turks, and they made two efforts to get possession of Vienna. They were both unsuccessful.

The second Turkish attempt to reach Vienna in 1566 marks the turning of the Turkish tide. It was a Croat, Zrinyi, who barred the way at Siget. The story of his devotion has made him a national hero not only to the Slavs, but to the Magyars, who like to suppress the fact that he was not one of their own countrymen. Zrinyi spent his private treasure fortifying Siget, and he held out for about six weeks, with less than 3000 men, against the whole Turkish forces of 200,000. The Sultan, admiring his courage, offered him honourable terms—he should be Prince of Dalmatia, Croatia and Slavonia. He would not yield. At last there was nothing for it but to die fighting. He called

his men together. "There is one road before us," he said, "that of honour." The men were ready to follow him anywhere. They marched out in a last sally, and nearly all died, including their chief. The fortress was lost, but Vienna was saved. The expedition had cost the Turks 30,000 lives, including that of Soleyman, their great Sultan, who died in his tent as the siege was ending, and they returned home.

The great war with Turkey determined the Austrian King of Hungary to organise the so-called "military frontiers." In these colonies, which were chiefly Slav, every male was to be a soldier. In return they were granted privileges, foremost among which was the right to their own religion, a remarkable concession in those days of religious persecution.

Hungary was now partitioned between Turkey and Austria. The Turks did not settle in their new dependency—they merely garrisoned and fleeced it.

A century later their armies stood for the last time before the walls of Vienna. They were driven back—partly by Serbian soldiers—and another decisive battle was fought at Mohács (1687), which practically put an end to Turkish rule in Hungary. Pursuing their advantage, the Austrian armies marched into Serbian territory. The hopes of the inhabitants rose. The Austrian Emperor considered the possibility of forming a Serbian State on his frontiers, and a Brankovitch was again

called Voivode. The Serbian patriarch was invited to cross the frontier with emigrants from Serbia, and no fewer than 37,000 families accepted the invitation, lured by fair-sounding promises of religious liberty and autonomy, and freedom from taxation. The Emperor's object was to create a power in his country to balance that of the Magyars; but in the midst of the proceedings he flung the last of the Brankovitches into prison, not because he had done any harm, but for reasons of State. He feared that the Serbs would make terms with the Turks, and escape from his suzerainty. George, the last of the Brankovitch family, died in 1711, after over twenty years' imprisonment.

Meanwhile, in 1669, Austria and Turkey had agreed to the Treaty of Karlovtzi, in Syrmia. By it, all Hungary was lost to Turkey except the Banat of Temishvar, which for many years had been mainly populated by Serbs.

In 1718, by the Treaty of Passarovitz (Pozharevatz), after the military successes of Prince Eugène of Savoy, Hungary was altogether freed, and half of Serbia, with Beograd, and part of Bosnia, were added to the Habsburg dominions. In 1737 a further large emigration of Serbs to Hungary was organised, but this time the Turks were on the watch and massacred the emigrants, knowing by experience what strength they carried to the enemy. In 1739, by the Peace of Beo-

grad, the northern part of Serbia again fell into the power of the Turks, and the last state of that tormented country became worse than the first.

The loyalty of the Slavs to Austria throughout these years is amazing. They played a large part in the campaigns of Eugène of Savoy, who described them as "his best scouts, his lightest cavalry, his most trusted garrisons." On the accession of Maria Theresa, the Serb and Croat element in the Austrian army was greater than every other put together, and their services in the War of the Austrian Succession were such as to earn them privileges that were looked upon with suspicion by the Magyars, and fermented trouble between the two races.

As the tide of Turkish invasion ebbed, the position of the Serbs in Hungary changed. As long as they had been useful, they had been privileged. When no longer useful, they were oppressed. The attempted Germanisation of Hungary by Austria led to a frenzied effort on the part of the Magyars, not only to maintain their own language and customs among themselves, but to impose them on the Serbs and Croats. In short, they wanted to do to others what they objected to the Austrians doing to them. The policy of the Austrian diplomats to play off one race against the other led to further antagonism, and religious persecutions aggravated the general situation. At a National Conference in 1747,

and again in 1769, the Serbs formulated their grievances, and between these two dates about 100,000 of them emigrated to Russia. Austria promised reforms; the position of the South Slavs was defined, an Illyrian chancellory was established for a short time at Vienna. These measures were rather calculated to lull into a sense of security than to effect any radical change.

Meanwhile, a severe blow had been dealt at the Serbian Church in Serbia. The Turks had been content to leave it alone as long as it occupied itself with ecclesiastical affairs only; but when the Patriarchs mixed themselves up with politics to the extent of shepherding huge colonies to Hungary, they looked upon them with suspicion, and in 1765 suppressed the Patriarchate of Petch. After this bishops of the Serbian Church were appointed from Constantinople, and ceased to be patriotic leaders.

But other influences were at work fanning the flame of national sentiment. The rise of Russia as a great empire, and the appearance of a Russian fleet in the Ægean in 1770 affected the imagination of the South Slavs. They were reminded that the potentialities of their race were as great as those of any other Aryan race, and Dositeus Obradovitch, a great scholar of the time, exhorted the Emperor of Austria to take action on behalf of the Serbs. "Turn thou thy face," he said, "towards a people, dear to thy ancestors, towards un-

happy Servia, which suffers countless miseries. Give us back our heroes of old, our country of bygone days." The Emperor Joseph II was not unmoved by these entreaties, and he and Catherine of Russia united in 1787 to drive the Turks out of Europe. The joy of the Serbs knew no bounds, and they flocked in thousands to the imperial standard to fight for the liberation of their country. The Serbs south of the Save formed a force 25,000 strong, with which they freed the country for the Imperial army, which penetrated as far as Krushevatz. Amidst scenes of the greatest excitement its churches were purified, and resounded once more with hymns of praise in the Slav tongue.

Unfortunately, Joseph II died in 1790, and his successor had different ideas about the interests of his country. The situation was bristling with difficulties. Several European Powers looked askance at the possibility of the Balkans being divided between Austria and Russia. Moreover, the French Revolution was producing a tendency on the part of crowned heads to look with suspicion upon all "rights" of the people. The Peace of Sistova was signed, and Serbia was given back to the terrible vengeance of the Turks. The well-known words of Alexa Nenadovitch, one of the Serbian leaders, express the indignation of a disillusioned people: "The Emperor has deserted me and the whole Serbian people, just as *his* ancestors deserted *ours*. I will go

from cloister to cloister, and bid every monk and priest take note of it, so that in future no single Serb may ever believe the Germans."

Meanwhile, the Empire of Turkey was falling to pieces. The inevitable result of the caste system seems to be an inertia that slowly paralyses the Government. Pashas and chiefs became more or less independent; the janissaries had developed into an hereditary class that drew pay, but did not necessarily do any service. Once the strength of the country, they were now a menace to constituted authority. So great had been their tyranny in Serbia, even before 1790, that the treaty of Sistova had stipulated their expulsion. The janissaries, however, took up arms in defence of their privileges, and the Sultan, to pacify them, allowed them to return to Serbia. Here they gathered round them many turbulent spirits from the neighbouring provinces. Extortion, strangling, torture, and the violation of women, became the order of the day.

Mustapha Pasha, the Turkish Governor of Serbia, was an enlightened man, whose care for the welfare of his people was such that he was affectionately called "the mother of the Serbs." He tried to bring the janissaries to book for the crimes they committed, and was consequently murdered by them. The excuse given to the Porte was: "Mustapha was a false Turk, who had sided with the rayah, and had found his reward." The Pashalik was now divided between four of their leaders,

called Dahis. The anarchy was such that spahis and rayah both sent separate protests to the Porte. That of the rayah, drawn up by Alexa Nenadovitch and other district and village headmen, described the situation in dignified but passionate words: "We have been plundered by the Dahis . . . threatened in our homes, in our religion, in our honour. No husband is sure of being able to protect his wife; no father his daughter; no brother his sister. Monasteries, churches, monks, priests, nothing is safe from their outrages. . . . Art thou still our Tzar? Then come and free us from these evildoers. Or if thou wilt not save us, at least tell us so that we may decide whether to flee to the mountains and forests, or to seek in the rivers an end of our miserable existence."

This was in 1803. It was the first muttering of the storm that was to bring independence to Serbia.

CHAPTER V

TOWARDS EMANCIPATION

(a) UNDER KARA GEORGE

THE Serbian petition was well received by the Sultan, who threatened the Dahis that he would send a force against them. He added that it would not be a Turkish one. The

Dahis concluded that his intention was to pit the Serbs against them, so they proceeded to massacre all men capable of leading them. Alexa Nenadovitch was among the victims. He refused to flee, "so that the other chiefs and the poor people," he said, "shall not suffer on my account. . . . Where I was born, there shall I live and die."

The Serbs thought extermination was meditated, and determined to sell their lives dearly as free men. The standard of revolt was raised. Down from the mountains poured the haiduks. Soon the whole pashalik was ablaze. The question of a leader was a momentous one, and it was a difficult one to decide where all were without education and with little experience. It is characteristic of the times that the first man suggested should have been a haiduk. He refused; people would have no confidence in him; he said, because he had no stake in the country, "neither a house, nor a field, nor anything to lose." At last some one proposed George Petrovitch, familiarly known as Kara George, or Black George. He objected that he did not know how to govern. The headmen said they would help him. He said his impetuosity unfitted him for the office, that he could not wait to consult, but should be inclined to kill at once if people disobeyed. They replied that at such a time severity was necessary, and he was chosen as their leader.

Kara George, who thus became the founder

of a dynasty, was an illiterate peasant, who made his living by the breeding of swine. In former days he had served with the Austrian army, and had had some experience of disciplined warfare. He had also been a haiduk before the mild rule of Mustapha tempted him to the more peaceful life of a farmer. He is described as being morose and silent, impatient of control, subject to blind fits of passion of which he repented at leisure, lacking in the coherence which education and training give. His military genius was of a high order, and to it may be attributed the extraordinary success of Serbian arms in the years that followed.

The rebels began the campaign by besieging the Turks in Beograd and other fortified towns. Shabatz was the first place to fall, through the gallant action of two hundred haiduks, who all lost their lives barring the way of the relief force. Meanwhile, the Sultan sent the Pasha of Bosnia to help to quell the janissaries, to avoid the scandal of Christians by themselves beating Mohammedans. The Dahis tried to escape, but were finally delivered over to the Serbs and beheaded by them.

Law and order were apparently restored, and the Serbs were advised to return to their fields and their flocks and herds. But it soon became evident that things could never be as they had been before. Three times the Serbs had got the better of the Turks. They began

to dream dreams. Their national self-consciousness was thoroughly awakened, their self-confidence restored. Further, they had every reason to distrust the good intentions of the Turks even on the question of the expulsion of the janissaries.

Under these circumstances they looked round for allies. At the outbreak of hostilities they had asked for help from Austria—in proportion to that recently given by them to Austria—only to be told that that country was now at peace with Turkey, and could not intervene. The Serbian Archbishop over the frontier, however, gave them a big gun, the mere sight of which is said to have terrorised the Turks on more than one occasion. In 1805 Austria was deeply involved in the Napoleonic wars, and she advised the Serbs to come to terms. It was against her interests that a powerful Serbian State should come into being in the Balkans. She feared it would be a centre of attraction for her own Serbs as well as Serbs in Turkey.

The Serbs had soon decided that they must have another string to their bow. The Austrians had tantalised them with fair prospects, and failed them, too often. Their hopes now centred in Russia, to whom they were bound by community of race, language and religion. Russia had already secured better terms from Turkey for Wallachia and Moldavia. Why should she not do the same for Serbia? A deputation had been sent to

Petrograd, and had been favourably received. The Russian Government now advised the Serbs to formulate their demands, and promised to push them at Constantinople. Beyond this they would not go. The menace of the European War was too great.

During all the vicissitudes of the following years the natural sequence of events was continually deflected from its course by the magnet of the Napoleonic wars. Balkan affairs came to be dominated by European politics, just as European politics came to be dominated more recently by the Balkan question. The phenomenon is explained by the fact that Turkey was a crumbling power. Her collapse meant almost inevitably an accession of strength to one of the neighbouring Powers—Russia or Austria, or both. This would upset the balance of power.

It would appear from the light of later events that the correct policy of Great Britain and France would have been to foster the formation of an independent South Slav state in the Balkans, but the possibility of the joining up of all Slavs made the proceeding a dangerous one in their eyes, and instead they bolstered up Turkey. The situation was anomalous and ridiculous, for the Turkish Government ran counter to the best traditions of both British and French races. But such anomalies were a feature of those times. Thus, at one moment we find the Sultan championing the Pope, and, at another,

reactionary Russia demanding a Constitution for Serbia.

The hostile attitude of the Porte began to show the Serbs that they had accurately gauged the precariousness of their situation. Orthodox Mohammedans were filled with anger at the idea of the Serbs defeating their own co-religionists even in the interests of the Sultan. The Sultan's own position was a difficult one. He had tried to reform the army, and had produced civil war between the army reformed and the army unreformed. Under these circumstances there were difficulties in arranging terms with the Serbians, and the Pasha of Nish was sent to disarm them as rebels. The Serbians resisted, and by the end of 1805 there were hostilities in every direction.

It was the moment when a strong and magnetic personality was the only hope of the Serbians.

The genius of Kara George became apparent at this moment of supreme crisis, and at the battle of Mishar (1806) the Turks were completely routed. With renewed hope the Serbs stated their terms.

The international situation at this moment favoured their cause. Napoleon had wrested Dalmatia from Austria, and the power of Russia was enhanced by this blow to her rival. But suddenly the scene changed. Napoleon defeated the Prussians and marched into Poland. Russia herself was threatened, and

France became the ally of the Porte. The Turks refused to accede to the Serbian demands and declared war against Russia. The Serbs took up the challenge, and soon the enemy were driven from the whole of the pashalik amidst scenes of bloodshed, in which the Turks reaped what they had sown. Large tracts of the country beyond also remained in the hands of the rebels. "The courage of its children," writes one historian, "had truly transformed the ancient pashalik of Beograd, and created a new principality of Serbia."

There is much that is tragic and pathetic, and also something that is comic, in the efforts of these illiterate peasants to found a state. What did they, tillers of the soil and breeders of cattle, know of government administration, law and education? Yet their shrewdness told them that it was imperative to show the world that they were capable of governing themselves. To fail at this point would be regarded as a justification of their former degradation, into which they might be allowed to relapse beyond the possibility of redemption. The better educated Serbs of Hungary came to their aid, feeling also that their national honour was bound up in the success of this novel experiment.

The new government dealt chiefly with the defence of the country, legislation, jurisdiction, finance and education. Elementary schools were started all over the country, and

a high school was opened at Beograd, where the teachers were all Austrian Serbs. The founder was the great patriot Dositeus Obradovitch, who did so much towards reforming the literary language of the Serbs. He also became one of its first teachers. Many of the prominent men of Serbia for years to come came from this her first experiment in secondary education.

Yet these new-fangled notions about government often seemed absurd to these untutored peasants, and on one occasion, when the Senate was not doing what he wanted, Kara George placed soldiers at the windows of the building where it met, and told them to point the muzzles of their guns at the Senators. "It is all very well," he said, "to make laws in comfortable rooms, but who will lead the way if the Turkish Army again appears?" There was a tendency on the part of Serbia's first leaders to imagine that they were a law unto themselves in every department of life. On another occasion the Russians remonstrated with Velyko, one of Serbia's most heroic leaders, for calling himself a haiduk, which meant robber. "I should be sorry," he answered, "if there were any greater haiduk than I." "If I possess aught," he would say, "any one may share it with me; but if I have not anything, woe be to him who has and will not share it with me."

In 1809, Turkey was threatened on all sides, and the second stage towards emancipation

was in full swing. The revolutionary movement had spread beyond Serbia to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Greece was in a state of ferment. Montenegro and Serbia meditated joining hands. Russia was free to help, and while she kept the Turks occupied in Bulgaria, Kara George marched westwards, the Bosnian rayah rising on all sides to support him. He succeeded in getting in touch with Montenegro, while Sima Markovitch penetrated farther into Bosnia. But the Turks were invading the country from the east, and carrying all before them. Singjelitch, who had succeeded in pushing forward to Nish, barred their way for some time at fortifications near Kamenitza, but no one came to relieve him. At last the Turks, pressing forward over the dead bodies of their comrades, succeeded in scaling the walls. Determined not to surrender, Singjelitch set fire to the powder magazine, so that the whole fort was blown up, and Serbs and Turks perished together. The Turks afterwards built a tower on the spot, in which were inserted the skulls of Serbians who had died there.

Ugly rumours floated about. People asked how it was that Singjelitch had not been relieved, and the answers seemed to be that there were jealousies among the chiefs. These threatened to bring upon the Serbians the downfall that their enemies had tried in vain to compass. They were divided on questions of loyalty to rival chiefs, who had the common

human habit of magnifying the value of their own services. Then there was an Austrian party and a Russian party. Kara George had leanings towards Austria; others thought salvation would come from Russia. The military situation for the moment was saved by the Russians stemming the tide of invasion, and the Russian general won Kara George to the Russian party by publicly acknowledging him as commander-in-chief. This was a great step towards unity, but it had become obvious that the security of the country could only be ensured by some radical changes that would tend to centralise authority. This object was attained at the Assembly of 1811, when Kara George had the supreme authority explicitly vested in himself.

The Russians and the Serbians, meanwhile, carried on more or less successful campaigns against the Turks till the see-saw of Napoleonic events changed the situation, and Russia was forced hurriedly to make peace with the Porte, and to withdraw her soldiers from Serbia to wage war against the French. This was in 1812. The Treaty of Bucarest, that settled the differences between the two countries, vaguely defined the position of Serbia, and great was the amazement and consternation of the people when they found that they were again to be vassals of the Turks, subject to Turkish taxes, and menaced by Turkish garrisons.

The Turks demanded a surrender of arms,

and the readmission into the country of expelled Turks—in fact, the *status quo ante bellum*. Their arrogance was increased by their success in re-establishing their power in Bulgaria and other disaffected districts, and by the news of the Russian defeat at Lützen. They determined to aim a final blow at the Serbs, and invaded the country in force.

Serbia had now no allies, but she had every reason to believe in the efficiency of her army. Kara George issued a proclamation which was read in all the churches, and which was a trumpet call to action. He reminded the people that for nine years they had successfully fought against the Turks, “every man, not only for himself, but also for his religion, and for the lives of his children. . . . Only let the nation rise unanimously, take up arms, and not grudge even their lives in defence of the country and their religion.” He disposed his army differently from former occasions, grouping it at three points on the frontiers instead of waiting for the onslaught in good strategical positions. He himself remained with the reserves.

Haiduk Velyko was one of the first people to meet the shock of invasion. The story of his defence of Negotin is one of the romantic incidents of the campaign. He was besieged here by 18,000 Turks, whom he harried by continual sallies, in which he lost few men while the enemy suffered heavily. Both sides at last sent for help. Kara George told

Mladen Milovanovitch, one of his chiefs, to go to the relief of Velyko. Mladen refused. "He may help himself," he said; "*his* praise is sung to him at his table by ten singers; *mine* is not: let him hold out himself, the hero!" These words are characteristic of the childish jealousies, due mostly to lack of education, which were compassing the fall of Serbia. Velyko sent to the Senate to say that at the New Year (when it was usual for Kara George and his chieftains to meet for consultation) he would inquire into what manner the country was governed. But he never had a chance. The Turks at Negotin received reinforcements, and one tower after another fell, till one only, the highest, where Velyko had his quarters, remained standing. At last that too fell, and the besieged forces retired to the vaults. Everything of the nature of tin or lead was melted down to make cannon balls, even spoons and church ornaments, and finally pieces of money. One day when Velyko was going his rounds, he was recognised by the Turks, who shot him down. He fell with the words "Stand firm!" on his lips. Some of his followers tried to conceal his death, but it was impossible; his presence was too sorely missed, and five days later his despairing troops escaped across a morass and dispersed. The death of Velyko was the first great blow to Serbia. After Negotin, one stronghold after another fell into the hands of the Turks.

The next unexpected blow was the illness of

Kara George, who, in the midst of the crisis, succumbed to what seems to have been an attack of typhus. Had he been able to lead his armies, there seems to have been no reason why he should not have saved the situation as he did at Mishar in 1806. When he recovered it was too late, and, after long deliberation, he decided to cross to Austria to await another chance of striking a blow for his country. Most of the Serbian leaders, including members of the Senate, did the same. Thus, in a few short months the prospect of emancipation, not only for Serbia, but for other Serbian countries, had passed to the limbo of dreams, and the Turks wreaked upon the wretched inhabitants of the land the accumulated vengeance of nine years of rebellion, and stained their national honour with deeds too horrible to dwell upon.

CHAPTER V (*continued*)

TOWARDS EMANCIPATION :

(*b*) UNDER MILOSH

AMONG the few leaders who remained in Serbia was Milosh Obrenovitch. When asked to flee, he replied : " What would be the use of my life to me in Austria, while my wife and child and old mother were sold into slavery by the enemy ? No, I will stay and share the

fate of my countrymen." This attitude gave him that ascendancy over the people that the other leaders had lost for ever.

There was no question now of defeating the Turks. All that could be hoped for was to save home, wife and family. But the Turks felt that the Serbs must be treated with circumspection, and they entered into negotiations with Milosh, promising to make him governor of a province if he would help to quiet the country. He consented, and it was obviously a great advantage to the Serbs to have one of their own people as intermediary at a moment when the temper of the Turks had been roused to a dangerous pitch. That they should prepare to tighten their hold on the country was inevitable: what Milosh might do was to prevent unnecessary cruelty. The Serbs had to submit to the prospect of larger garrisons, high taxes and bond service, partly used for the building of new fortifications. An attempt was also made to disarm the people, while spahis and janissaries flocked back to their old haunts.

It was not long before another insurrection broke out, to be punished by unheard-of cruelty. At Constantinople it was said that "rayah who revolted so often ought to be exterminated." Milosh began to see that his position was a difficult one. When the head of one of the leading Serbs was brought in, a Turk said to him, "Hast thou seen this head, knez? It will be thy turn next." "Vallah,"

he replied, "I no longer consider the head I carry my own."

An attempt was made to interest the Congress of Vienna in the fate of the Serbs. A terrible tale of atrocities was divulged, and Russia made an eloquent appeal on their behalf. "There exists in Europe," said one of their representatives, "a code concerning the rights of peoples which has the force of law, in time of peace as in time of war. It is . . . the most precious fruit of civilisation. In virtue of this right, universally recognised, the individual taken arms in hand does not become for ever after the property of the victor . . . gratuitous cruelty is not tolerated. . . . It is in the name of these principles that the leaders of the European family have the right to demand from the Porte the end of so many atrocities." The Powers were impressed, but the danger of upsetting the balance of power overcame their scruples.

The leaders in Serbia conferred together; their councils were long and anxious. The knowledge of what Turkish vengeance meant was very near to them, and never had the Turks been so well prepared to crush them. Two extreme parties formed: one wanted to accept their fate; the other proposed that they should kill their wives and children, and go into the mountains and give up their lives in a last supreme struggle.

When the spirit of resistance has reached such a stage as this, men are almost invincible.

Milosh, after long deliberation, decided to place himself at the head of the rebellion. On Palm Sunday, 1815, he appeared at the church of Takovo and addressed the people. "Here am I," he said, "and, with me, war against the Turks." To Mahmoud he wrote: "We are as people who no longer know fear."

The insurrection took the normal course: first, the garrisons were overcome, then the armies from Turkey had to be reckoned with. The strongest fortress was the new one at Pozharevatz. Everything was at stake, and the Serbians knew it. On the eve of the critical day of the fighting, Milosh called his captains together and told them that they might go now if their heart failed them, but if any one tried to flee to-morrow he would shoot him down. The Turks came out to the fortress to meet Milosh. "Delibasha," he cried to their leader, "I do not know whether thou hast any other road than that through my forces, but I certainly have no other choice than to fight with thee for life or death." After some of the severest fighting of the campaign Pozharevatz fell, and the first phase of the insurrection was practically over.

Milosh's behaviour to the defeated Turks was exemplary, and created great astonishment. Their wounds were dressed. The women and children were unmolested, and provided with wagons. They said "they had been treated as though they had been the mothers and sisters of the victors."

Fortunately for the Serbs, the Turks thought better than to proceed to extremities. The Napoleonic menace had ended in Waterloo and St. Helena. Russia's position was particularly strong, and she was demanding why there was fighting in Serbia contrary to the stipulations of the Treaty of Bucarest. The Turks resolved to negotiate. They were willing to grant autonomy, whatever that might mean. Its interpretation fluctuated like a barometer according to the pressure Russia was able to bring. The points that admitted of no two interpretations were the question of the return of the spahis and the disarming of the people, and it was on these that negotiations continually broke down. At last the Turks seemed to give in on the question of arms. "Only be submissive," said the Pasha, "and you may carry as many pistols as you please in your belt—cannon even, for what I care!" This promise was followed by a Firman of Peace from the Sultan to the Pasha. "As God had entrusted his subjects to the Sultan, so the Sultan recommended them to the Pasha, and by kind treatment towards them he would best perform his duty." On the strength of these vague pronouncements peace was patched up, each party biding its time till some change in the political situation should give a decided advantage to the one side or the other.

The years that followed were a duel between Milosh and the Turks. The Turks thought

that by playing up to the vaulting ambitions of Milosh they would induce him to sacrifice his country to them. Milosh was astute enough to see that his power was derived from two sources—from the Serbs on the one side and the Turks on the other, and that it was to his interest to balance the two. If once out of touch with the Serbs he would be at the mercy of the Turks, while his influence with his countrymen depended on his handling the power given by the Turks to their advantage.

In the year 1817 the situation was complicated by the return of Kara George, who was now in league with the Greek *hetæria*, an organisation sworn to rid themselves of the Turks. Obviously there was not room in Serbia for two such chiefs as he and Milosh, and it looked as if the dearly won semi-independence of the country might be extinguished by internal dissensions. There are many versions of the fate of Kara George. It is said that Milosh informed the Pasha of his return and his political connection, and that the Turks said they would have his head or that of Milosh himself. The Serbian chiefs then deliberated about what was to be done, and one rose and said: "Gospodar, we must do with Kara George as with the lamb on Easter Day." Certain it is that the old chief was killed, and the rivalry between the two families that founded Serbia's national dynasties was turned into the deadly feud which was to be the curse of the young nation for the next hundred years.

In the same year (1817) Milosh had himself recognised as Supreme Knez, or Prince, of the Serbians, while the Turks watched the dawn of independence in angry impotence.

The year 1817 would almost seem to be a turning-point in Milosh's career. His growing thirst for power began to stifle other considerations in him. In this he is a remarkable contrast to another founder of a dynasty, Stephen Nemanya, whose sense of the emptiness of power grew with age. It would seem as though Milosh's ideas of power were vitiated by Turkish ideals, the only ones with which he had ever come into contact. He lacked the education that might have given a different bias to his mind. It is notorious that newly acquired power is apt to be badly used, and is tainted by the tyranny from which it rebounds. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that only a strong man such as Milosh could have piloted the young state through the well-nigh insurmountable difficulties of those early days of transition from the irresponsibility of degradation to the responsibilities of a free people. Under him Serbia was reborn. He won independence for her Church; he gave the country schools and printing presses, promoted culture, originated legislation, organised village and other local communities, built roads, encouraged trade. Thus Serbia became the leader of emancipation in the Balkans, and the centre of the national idea that was to draw together eleven million people.

The undefined position of affairs in Serbia continued for some years. The restiveness of other Christian populations in Turkey, and the obvious determination of Russia to interfere when any difficulty arose, made the Turks anxious to settle affairs with Serbia by getting the Serbians, in return for certain concessions, to promise never to ask for any more. Such was the ill-feeling aroused by a reopening of vexed questions, and such was the mutual distrust of the conferring parties, that Milosh was warned that he would lose his life if he trusted himself inside Beograd. A conference took place about a mile distant, but it ended in the Turkish leader riding away in disgust. He told the Porte that there were no longer rayah in Serbia, only armed people.

Vexed questions were again left in abeyance, and, while things drifted, Milosh consolidated his power. He oppressed the peasants in real Turkish fashion, and for a time they accepted their fate, fearing political annihilation as a result of quarrelling among themselves. But in 1824 their patience gave way, and there was a serious peasant revolt. It was quelled, and punished with a ferocity worthy of the Turks.

The Turks were unable to seize the moment to further their own interests. Russia was again on the warpath. The greatest revolution that Turkey had known was threatening in Greece, and had the sympathy of England and France as well as Russia. The janissary question was again a public menace to Con-

stantinople. Under the circumstances Turkey signed with Russia the Convention of Akerman, by which certain concessions were granted to the Serbians. Later, the Turks candidly acknowledged that they had promised them only with a view to gaining time. They proceeded at once to reform their army, and dispersed the janissaries in Constantinople by the simple method of turning the cannon on them. The corps was definitely abolished in 1826. Firmly convinced of the strength gained by internal reform, the Turks defied the Powers, in spite of the destruction of their fleet at Navarino. They were, however, unable to check the advance of the Russian army, which approached so near Constantinople that they became alarmed, and agreed to the Peace of Adrianople (1829). By it they promised that the terms of the Treaty of Bucarest should be executed "without the least delay, and with the most conscientious exactness," and that within a month they would "bring to the cognisance of the Russian Court the Firman (decree) concerning these matters."

Thus, in 1830, the Serbians gained their Charter of Independence in the form of a "Hatisherif" (irrevocable order) from the Sultan, while Milosh was for the first time recognised by the Porte as hereditary prince. This decree granted internal independence to Serbia, which was to be governed by the Prince and a Council of Elders, and no Turks

were to be allowed in the country except those in the fortresses, which were still to be garrisoned by them. A single fixed tax was to be paid, out of which the spahis were to be indemnified. All the galling restrictions of former days were to be abolished: the Serbians could build houses as high as they liked, wear what clothes they would, bear arms, ring their church bells, build churches, schools and hospitals without asking permission. Further, their Church was to be again a national one, with its own native bishops and metropolitans.

CHAPTER VI

GROPINGS TOWARDS DEMOCRACY

THE Serbs, having more or less disposed of the Turkish question, were now at leisure to deal with the difficulties arising from the despotic oppression of Milosh, who ignored the Council of Elders who were supposed to help him to rule, and acted as if the country and its people were his private possessions. "Am I not gospodar, and shall I not do what I will with my own?" he asked. He seized whatever he liked—land, houses, mills—and fixed his own price for them. He even burnt down a part of Beograd to build a new Customs House. He exacted bond service. He tried to prevent the exploitation of salt mines

in Serbia, because he had money invested in the salt trade in Rumania. He tried to monopolise the swine trade, the most lucrative in the country; indeed, it seemed at last as if he were trying to monopolise all trade.

It became evident that there would be no freedom from Turkish systems without the development of a different code of ideals, which must come by education and culture. Fortunately, the young people growing up in the high school of Beograd were rapidly absorbing the ideas of the West, and the force of their idealism was to prove stronger than the despotism of Milosh.

Milosh at last became aware of the approach of a storm. "Is it true what the people say?" he asked of an old retainer. "My prince, it is true," was the answer; "the people say they cannot go on any longer in their present state." What they wanted, he explained, was security for life and property. "If that be the case," said Milosh, "I will satisfy them."

Accordingly, Milosh agreed to the Constitution promulgated in 1835, and, at one stroke of the pen, Serbia was metamorphosed—theoretically—from an Eastern despotism to a constitutional state, modelled according to the latest Western ideals, with a parliament, universal suffrage, and all the paraphernalia of Western administration. Vuk Karadzhi, the great scholar, and others, were deputed to compile a Code, on the basis of the N

leonic Code. It is said that when asked to express his approval of it, Milosh said : " It is perfect ; add only at the end the words ' Or, as the Prince wishes.' " They exactly expressed his intentions with regard to all reform.

The world was astonished at the Constitution, and Russia asked wrathfully what the Serbs meant by compiling a Code " from all kinds of Republican theories," which no European cabinet could approve, and which were incompatible with Turkish suzerainty. The Turks were angry at other proceedings on this memorable occasion. They saw the implication in the title given to Milosh—" Chief of all the Serbs." They noted that people were present as deputies from other Slav provinces. Although Milosh opined that the Serbs could do what they liked in the way of inventing constitutions, he seized the excuse of the disapproval of Turkey and of Russia to govern as he did before—without reference to the will of the people. The Constitution was suppressed, and the Code in process of compilation was never published. His official Gazette (*Novine Srpske*) of 1835 announced him as the " only master," and said that no one besides himself had any claim to political power. The same year he went to Constantinople, and fostered good relations between himself and the Sultan, and also sought to interest the representatives of foreign powers in his country. The upshot of his manœuvres was that Great Britain, in 1837, sent Colonel

Hodges to Beograd as their agent. The Russians were still further annoyed at this proceeding. They saw that Milosh was trying to play off England against them. England at this time tried to get Serbia put under the protection of the Great Powers, but failed. From this period dates the acute diplomatic struggle between Great Britain and Russia, which was to affect so seriously the course of affairs in the Near East.

The Porte and Russia were now united in their fear of Milosh, and an anomalous situation arose that was not without its humorous side. While constitutional England backed Milosh and his despotism, Russia and Turkey, to whom constitutions and such abominations were anathema, demanded that the power of Milosh should be curtailed by something that was euphemistically called "an organic regulation." The main point of it was that there was to be a Senate of members appointed for life, so that Milosh could not get rid of them at will. Milosh had to give in, but when one of the first acts of the new government was to ask him for an account of his spending of public moneys, his position became untenable and he abdicated.

He decided to go to Austria, and some of his senators and other prominent people accompanied him as far as the Save. We are told that he did not utter a word, and that some of those present were moved to tears as they said good-bye. But his great enemy,

Vuchitch, is said to have taken a pebble and thrown it into the water, with the words: "When this stone returns from the bottom, you shall return to Serbia again."

Thus ended for the present the public career of a man who, whatever his faults, led the Serbs to independence, and founded the new Serbian State under conditions of supreme difficulty; and who, by the very excess of his despotism, paved the way to democracy, since his determination not to create a land-owner class preserved the equality of the classes below him. "He bars the way of all of us," said the chiefs ambitious of power. It is largely due to this policy of Milosh that Serbia has to-day the unique distinction in Europe of being a State of peasant proprietors.

The old prince left with the conviction that he would die as Prince of Serbia, and his presentiment came true. Meanwhile, Serbia was to pass nearly twenty years in political experiments. Milosh was succeeded by his son Milan, who died of consumption about a month later without even knowing that he was prince. His young brother Michael succeeded him, and Serbia was exposed to the dangers of a minority. The oligarchic rule that resulted pleased the people no more than the former despotism. They complained that while under Milosh they had one ditch to fill with money, they now had seventeen—one for each senator.

The Turks took advantage of internal dis-

sensions to reassert their influence in Serbia. This the people could not easily forgive. They demanded the trial of the two leading councillors, Vuchitch and Petronievitch, who were nominees of the Porte, and whom Michael refused to accept, and insisted upon the removal of the Government to Kraguyevatz to be away from the Turkish influences of Beograd. The two councillors fled the country, and the Turks sent envoys to restore order; but the strong action of the Government in showing the Porte that it would brook no interference secured internal peace, and Michael was free to forward his schemes for the reform of the country. In this work his right-hand man was Radichevitch, an Austrian Serb of great parts, who became Minister of Education. But Michael was young, and Radichevitch had some of the detachment of the idealist. They failed to see that the time was not ripe for all that they wanted, that in the history of progress the devil takes the foremost as well as the hindmost. The Minister of Education collected statistics on all sorts of subjects, and the peasants were enraged at seeing their plum trees counted. To them these proceedings seemed inquisitorial, and they saw in statistics nothing but an elaborate basis for future taxation. It was ordained that every Serb was to learn how to read and write. The fact remained that every Serb did not see the necessity. An opera-theatre was opened, run chiefly by

amateurs. The people grumbled at the expenditure involved in these newfangled ideas of "wise Swabians," as they called the Austrian Serbs.

The development of trade with Austria led to an influx of Austrian traders, especially makers of potash. After centuries of foreign misrule, the Serbs could not at a moment's notice rid themselves of the idea that all foreigners were natural enemies. Had they got rid of the Turks only to be invaded by Austrians? Free fights became frequent in the forests where potash was made.

The Minister and his colleagues suffered the fate of many reformers: they found that the people that they wished to benefit were the last to see the point of their reforms. They had put before themselves the stupendous task of compressing into one generation the normal development of centuries. It was as if a cart were trying to catch up other carts which had had several hundred miles' start in a race. Is it to be wondered at that in the frenzied pace that was necessary there should be many spills?

The people were irritated, but this was not all. The Turks watched the proceedings with exasperation. The new national theatre revelled in dramas which represented the prowess of the Serb warrior against the Turk. The meteoric progress of the new State, if it met no obstacles, might carry in its train the rest of Turkey-in-Europe. Indeed, Bulgaria was already looking to Serbia for a lead to-

wards emancipation. Obviously an obstacle to progress must be provided. Vuchitch was the tool of the Porte, and, encouraged by the discontent in Serbia, he returned and headed a rebellion. Michael's army was dispersed, and the young prince had to retire to Austrian territory. He was still, according to Western ideas, a minor.

Vuchitch thought that he would be able to form a triumvirate; but the people demanded a prince, and Alexander, the son of Kara George, was chosen amidst scenes of great enthusiasm.

Russia was now angry in her turn. She scolded the Porte for allowing such upheavals in Serbia, and said that the change of rule ought never to have been made without her consent. She insisted on another election, but the Serbians were determined not to be interfered with, and re-elected Alexander. Russia was to some extent mollified by the exile of Vuchitch and Petronievitch, who were almost as unpopular with the Russians as with the Serbs on account of their intrigues with the Porte.

Serbia then settled down to a few years of undisturbed peace. Alexander Karageorgevitch confined his energies to questions of internal progress, and did not let his attention wander to pan-Serb ideals that perhaps seemed to him chimerical. But Serbia's peaceful dreams were broken by events of European importance.

The revolutionary spirit of 1848 seriously

affected the situation of the Austrian Serbs, and had its repercussion on the whole of the Balkans. The Crimean War brought England and France into close touch with the Near East. The result was the formation in Serbia of an Austrian party, to which the prince himself belonged, and a French party, headed by Garashanin. It is significant that both parties thought it necessary to tour the country in order to get the ear of the people. However, Alexander seriously prejudiced himself in their eyes by trying to curtail the power of his opponents by limiting the Constitution. This immediately gave them the opportunity of posing as defenders of the rights of the people. Both sides appealed to the Porte. The people were incensed. So strong was the wave of indignation that Alexander had to abdicate. But the oligarchy were baulked of the spoils of victory at the very moment when they seemed within their grasp. The Skupshtina, that had once preferred Alexander to a triumvirate, now in 1858 voted for the recall of Milosh, who, whatever his faults, had never tolerated foreign influence, nor dragged Turkey into domestic quarrels.

Ideals of democracy were far from being attained in Serbia, but the bent of the people was unmistakable. The Skupshtina had entered into its own as the supreme Court of Appeal.

CHAPTER VII

SERBIA AS A PAWN IN EUROPEAN POLITICS

FROM the moment the tide of Turkish invasion swept backwards, the tendency of Austria was to sweep forwards in its wake, and as the Empire of Turkey showed increasing signs of tottering to a fall, the merging of Serbia in Austria had come, in the eighteenth century, very near realisation. Serbia was bound to Austria by associations of great antiquity. Austria had been a haven of refuge in time of stress, her appearance again and again in Serbia in the wake of the retreating Turks had helped to keep alive the hope of emancipation among the Serbs, and had accustomed them to look upon her as their one hope of salvation. The Serbs in Austria, who looked upon the Magyars as oppressors, were long in awaking to the fact that the Austrian dynasty was their enemy too. The privileges granted to the military frontiers, as long as they were necessary to Austria as a bulwark against the Turks, had created the illusion of Habsburg benevolence. The celebrated song of the Granichars (frontiersmen) begins—

“The Serb is ready to fight; he’s bred to be a soldier,”

but few of those who sing it and listen to it to-day realise the gist of the last lines—

“Whene’er the holy Emperor calls, the Grani-char is ready to march to death.”

Towards the end of the eighteenth century another solution of the Balkan problem became a possibility. The power of Russia had become formidable, and she was bound to the South Slavs by the strong ties of religion, race, and language. Why should not they be merged in her vast dominions?

It was inevitable that the interests of Russia and Austria should clash in the Balkans; but the two powers determined to arrange things amicably, if possible, and in 1787 they agreed by a secret treaty to drive the Turks out of Europe and share the Balkan spoils. Their plans were frustrated, partly by the vigilance of the Western Powers, who were determined not to allow any rearrangement of territory that would upset the balance of power.

Early in the nineteenth century, as we know, Russia took active steps to free the Christian provinces in the Balkans from Turkey, but she was unable to proceed to the annexation of Serbia on account of the continued “Hands off!” attitude of the Powers. In this way the possibility of a third solution of the Balkan situation arose, namely the establishment of an independent South Slav state, or combination of states. For this purpose the protracted suzerainty of Turkey over a practically independent Serbia was all to the good. It gave her power to grow strong before

the inevitable tug of war came with other nations.

The whole force of Austria was pitted against this apparently happy solution of a difficult problem. Serbia must belong either to Turkey or Austria, said Metternich. He saw in a free Serbia a magnet that would attract to herself the Serbian population of Austria. The history of the last century shows the slow unfolding of this drama of rival interests, which reached its climax in the great war.

The year 1848 was a turning-point in the history of Austria as in that of Europe. France overthrew her king and formed a Republic, and the contagion of Western ideas coursed through Europe like a whirlwind. Other dissatisfied peoples dreamed dreams, and the principle of nationalities became rampant. This was a question that seriously affected heterogeneous Austria, and it brought about a racial war. The Serbs of Serbia watched the course of events with intense interest, and many crossed the frontiers to fight the battles of their brethren, who were ranged on the side of the Imperial army against the Magyars. The great Croat general, Yellachitch, on this occasion probably saved the Austrian Empire. But the Emperor Ferdinand was forced to flee, and Francis Joseph reigned in his stead.

As 1848 marks a crisis in the progress of democratic ideas, so the year 1853 marks a

crisis in the international situation produced by the dismemberment of Turkey. The Crimean War was the first clash of arms between Great Britain and Russia on the question of the Near East. On this occasion Great Britain and France appeared as the champions of the Turks against Serbia's protector, Russia. The situation that arose was for Serbian politicians extremely delicate. Must Serbia be ungrateful to Russia, or disloyal to her suzerain, Turkey? The West looked with apprehension upon the possibility of Serbia throwing in her lot with Russia, and perhaps turning the scales in her favour. The triumph of Russia under these circumstances almost certainly meant the extension of her rule over much of the Balkans. It was to be avoided at all costs. Austria was equally interested in maintaining the neutrality of Serbia, and she threatened to invade her if she showed any signs of taking part in the war on either side.

The energies of Serbia were concentrated on maintaining her independence. She had no desire to be swallowed up in Russia. "The Turkish yoke is wood, the Russian yoke is iron," was a familiar Serbian saying, to express the fact that there was a possibility of breaking the one, none of escaping from the other. However, she bent to the dictation of Russia to the extent of dismissing her anti-Russian statesman Garashanin, who looked to France and the West for Serbia's salvation, and who apprehended danger from both

Austria and Russia. Great Britain's ambassador urged the Porte to keep Serbia quiet by promising to maintain her ancient privileges.

The position of Serbia as a pawn of first importance in European diplomacy was becoming increasingly apparent, and her statesmen thought the moment opportune for disseminating knowledge that would enlist the sympathies of the West. For this purpose they sent emissaries to England and France to rouse public opinion in favour of her independence.

By the treaty of Paris which ended the Crimean War, Serbia's relations with Turkey remained on much the same footing as before, but she was placed under the joint protection of the great Powers, and a clause enacted "that there should be no armed intervention in the country without the consent of the contracting Powers." The idea of the Allies was, of course, to check the advance of Russia in the Balkans. Serbia was the gainer in so far as she was placed beyond the power of designing neighbours, undoubtedly more powerful than herself, and from whom she had everything to fear. She was the loser in so far as her position as vassal to Turkey was more or less guaranteed by Powers against which there could be no appeal. Fortunately, from Turkey she had little further to fear. Turkey had every reason to be satisfied, for the preservation of the *status quo* is always favourable to an effete state.

It became the habit of Western politicians to treat Russia as the villain of the Eastern drama, but it must be admitted that, whatever her motives, she had brought the independence of Serbia within the range of practical politics, and deserves to be called the liberator of the Balkans more than any other European Power. As Russia—from interested motives perhaps—saved Serbia from Turkey, so the Western Powers, with the same self-interest, pursued the policy of saving Serbia from Russia, and the effect of the conflicting interests was not harmful to the South Slavs till the time of the ill-fated Treaty of Berlin.

Serbia, by the conditions of the Treaty of Paris, became a prominent factor in European politics, and her internal politics, as a natural consequence, became largely influenced by foreign affairs. It was differences of opinion on questions of foreign policy that led to the fall of Alexander Karageorgevitch. The time was a critical one for Serbia, and the people desired a strong hand at the helm of state, and asked for the return of Milosh.

Milosh made his triumphal entry into Beograd early in 1859. "My only care for the future," he declared to his people, "will be to make you happy, you and your children whom I love as well as my own son, the heir to your throne, Prince Michael." Thus, in his first words he showed his old determination. His dignity was not to be only for life, like Alexander's. It was to be hereditary.

The Porte refused to ratify the arrangement. Milosh showed himself independent of Turkish ratifications, and he at once began experiments to gauge the extent of power Serbia had acquired by the Treaty of Paris. He peremptorily ordered the Turks who policed the streets of Beograd to retire to their garrisons, and he demanded from the Porte the withdrawal of all Turks except those in garrisons in fulfilment of the stipulations of a former treaty. He was equally high-handed with Austria, who objected to the importation of arms into Serbia. His neighbours might gnash their teeth at his proceedings, but interference might mean the descent of all the Powers to demand the reason why, and, sooner than face the possible consequences, Turkey and Austria winked at a good deal.

But there was one thing that the old Prince had not learnt in the broodings of exile. He belonged to an age when one man's will could be law, and when it was best so. His contemporaries might tolerate him out of gratitude for his heroic past; a younger generation had grown up with eyes turned to a future in which the consummation of human rights was to bear its glorious fruit. Milosh had liberated Serbia from Turkey, it was now for the young generation to contribute to the emancipation of other Christian states by showing to what uses freedom was to be put, and what was to be gained by throwing off the Turkish yoke. The question was of vital importance, not only

to the states under the heel of Turkey, but to the Powers who, however selfish their interests, knew that the public opinion of the world was not easily to be flouted, if the South Slavs proved themselves worthy of independence.

Milosh died in 1860, in his eightieth year. Michael, who succeeded him, was a man of a different stamp, and his early impulses had taken him to the opposite extreme of progressive reform. But his father's and his own early fate had left him with no illusions as to the divine right of kings to do what they like; and he knew that you could not even uplift people with impunity into rarefied regions of idealism to which they had not yet learnt to aspire.

Michael had travelled much, and had learnt much from the experiences of other states. He was the first of the nineteenth-century Serbian princes to grasp the full meaning of foreign politics and their relation to Serbia. He at once set about organising Serbia, first, with a view to consolidating his own position; secondly, with the idea of increasing the prestige of Serbia with foreign Powers. He curbed the power of the oligarchy which had for so many years been the bane of the young state's life, by bringing the senators under the jurisdiction of the law courts, so that if they did not behave themselves they could be dismissed without asking the consent of the Turks. He also attempted, with due caution, to widen

the scope of the Skupshtina, which was now to meet every three years instead of once in a blue moon. But it still had little power, and could not initiate legislation nor control the budget. It would have been premature to give it, for this reason. There was a large and important class of farmers and peasants without education; there was a small professional class. Superiority of education gave the latter an undue advantage in the Skupshtina, and rendered it unrepresentative except on simple questions that all could understand. Time alone could remedy this defect. It must be borne in mind that it was little more than thirty years since Serbia had achieved the power to educate her people.

What Michael did was this. He showed his intention not to be a tyrant: the basis was ready for the democratic structure as soon as the people were ready to build upon it. The curbing of the oligarchy was a boon to all. Michael emerged from the reorganisation with little short of autocratic power, chiefly because—and this point is important—the people were as yet unprepared to shoulder the burdens of state. The Prince, having assured his own position, provided for a conscript army instead of the mustering of the clans. For this purpose a French officer was appointed War Minister. The Powers looked on with interest: they did not know where this activity would lead. Turkey naturally objected, and Austria felt that such activities near her

frontier were most undesirable. Russia was pleased at what was likely to undermine the strength of Turkey, and Great Britain followed her traditional policy, dictated by fear of Russia. France for once was on the side of Serbia, being gratified at the predilection shown for French methods. Serbia would hardly act against French interests while a Frenchman was War Minister.

During the 'sixties signs of anti-Turkish feeling burst out in one place after another in Turkey-in-Europe. Montenegro, Herzegovina, Rumania, Crete, Greece were all affected. The dismemberment of the Empire seemed at hand, and the Powers watched the situation feverishly. Turkey was the "sick man" of European diplomacy. Various Powers aimed at being the beneficiaries of the deceased, though never, perhaps, was the saying better justified that "creaking doors last long." For the moment we are only concerned with Serbia.

As often happens when events of great moment are at hand, a trivial incident produced hostilities. The powder magazine was ready, it was only a question of putting a match to it. The first scene in the drama was a quarrel at a well between a Turkish boy and a Serbian. A riot was the consequence, and the bombardment of Beograd by the Turkish garrison. A few people were killed, not many, for the marksmanship of the Turks was anything but accurate.

The next act showed all the representatives of the Powers meeting at Constantinople to discuss the situation, which thus assumed international importance. The Turks were advised to evacuate all the fortresses except four, and to withdraw all Turkish residents after due compensation for loss of property.

Serbia seized the moment to flood Europe with leaflets, and the third act of the drama shows us Michael's wife, the charming Princess Julia, in London, trying to enlist the sympathies of Great Britain in Serbia's final struggle for independence. It was on this occasion that Lord Palmerston made his famous pun. Princess Julia's dress caught in a door, and Lord Pam advanced with the words: "Princesse, la Porte est sur votre chemin pour vous empêcher d'avancer." But the Porte was soon to cease to be an obstacle in Serbia's path. The interest of Europe was slowly being aroused in the Christian peoples of the Balkans. Lord Palmerston and the *Morning Post* may have been unsympathetic, but the great power of Cobden was enlisted on the side of the Serbs. "I read the other day," he said in the House of Commons (1863), "Ranke's celebrated history of Serbia, and I thought I had never met with a more heroic struggle for independence. God knows," he went on, "no people could have been subject to the Turkish Government without suffering great moral deterioration, but there is this distinct feature about the Christian population

in Turkey—that they are a progressive people ; that they are seeking to catch the light of Western Europe, and to enter upon a new path of civilisation and progress. God forbid that the policy of our Foreign Office should find itself for a moment enlisted in opposition to their aspirations.”

Serbia, during the next few years, was of great political significance in Europe. The jubilee of her separate political existence was celebrated with wild enthusiasm, and was the occasion of a manifestation of South Slav national feeling. She formed alliances with Montenegro and Greece, laid the foundations of an entente with Rumania, and was on terms of close friendship with Bulgarian patriots. The way was, in fact, being paved for a great Balkan Christian Alliance, the object of which was joint action against Turkey. The first success of the combination was the withdrawing of Turkish garrisons from Serbia in 1867, the fortresses now being “ confided to the care of Michael.” The rising in Crete the year before contributed largely to this diplomatic success. The tactfulness of the Prince’s negotiations and the pressure of the Powers at the Porte also counted for something. It is noteworthy that the attitude of Great Britain changed on the subject of the fortresses after the visit of Princess Julia to London in 1863. So great was the prestige of Serbia at this time that Great Britain and France discussed putting Bosnia under her protection.

It seemed as if the evolution of a large Serbian State was on its way to realisation by diplomatic steps. What Austria dreaded was actually happening. Serbia was attracting to herself all the South Slavs of Turkey. Would it end there? Or would she attract the South Slavs in Austria too?

During these years great events had been shaping the destinies of Austria. The Young Italy movement had turned her out of Italy for good and all. After her defeat at Königgrätz by the Prussians, she was excluded from the Germanic Federation, in which she had hitherto played a predominant part. The lead now passed to the growing power of Prussia. Therefore there was no hope of expansion to the north or the west. Her only hope was the south-east—that is, the Balkans.

Naturally, the prospect of a Young Serbia movement was to Austria as a red rag to a bull. It must be put a stop to at all costs. Unfortunately, there were traitors in the Serbian camp. The existence of two rival dynasties was an endless cause of trouble. The dynasty out of power served always as a nucleus for the malcontents that exist in every state, but who generally have little power to do harm; and, owing to the peculiar circumstances of Serbia, there was always a foreign power to assist an upheaval.

Michael, at the height of his power, found himself beset with enemies. His attempt to tax people according to their income had annoyed the wealthier classes. He alienated

even some of his own adherents by employing some of the Kara George faction in responsible posts. "Serbia is so small a country," he said, "and has so great a mission, that I cannot look at the colour of the men I employ in the service of the State." His magnanimity did not meet with the reward it deserved. It even encouraged his enemies to think they could conspire with impunity. In the year 1868 a widespread conspiracy was on foot, his enemies representing that his fiscal and military reforms were injurious to the country. Michael was warned of danger, but refused to take precautions. He met his death while walking in the shady park of Topchider, at the hands of men who seem to have been hired assassins. The details of the plot have always remained a mystery. It failed to effect a change of dynasty owing to a fortuitous circumstance. The carriage containing the murderers broke down on its way to Beograd, and the news of the crime reached the ears of the Government before it was known to the chief conspirators. The ministers took the precautions necessary to avoid a coup d'état.

Michael had been the best of Serbia's modern rulers, and seldom has the death of a single individual so successfully blighted a nation's destinies. Up to this moment the possibility of uniting the Bulgarians under the same sceptre as Serbia had not seemed too chimerical. The possibility never came again. The Prince of Montenegro had said to Michael:

“Form a kingdom that will unite all Serbs, and I shall gladly be the first to mount ^{g. done} before your palace.” The two princes had arranged that if their plans for a greater Serbia were successful, Nicholas would abdicate in favour of Michael, but in the case of Michael dying without issue, Nicholas was to succeed him. Under the next two reigns the monarchy became such a byword in Europe that it was unthinkable that the proud Montenegrins should bow to it. In the same way it became impossible that the Serbs in Austria should look to it for a lead. The other possible solution to the South Slav problem seemed to be the gradual merging of South Slav provinces in Austria, and the Powers readjusted their views somewhat in this sense. Great Britain was too much hypnotised by the Russian menace to see the Germanic peril in the arrangement. Austria was malingering as the second “sick man” of Europe, to whom Powers delight to minister.

The idea of Serbia forming the nucleus of a great Slav State thus gradually passed beyond the range of practical politics, and the Balkan situation reverted in many respects to the position it had been in a hundred years before, and history repeated itself in one event after another.

CHAPTER VIII

UNREST IN TURKEY LEADS TO THE TREATY
OF BERLIN

MICHAEL was succeeded by his grand-nephew Milan, barely fourteen at the time, and the Government was carried on by regents, chief of whom was Jovan Ristitch, a man of great ability and an enthusiastic supporter of Serb unity.

At first the disaster that had come to Serbia was not fully realised. Progress continued. The self-consciousness of the nation was becoming stronger; every year brought a larger relay of educated men into public life.

To meet new conditions a new Constitution was formed in 1869. The Assembly was to meet every year, and to be elected every three years; it was to control the budget, and share legislative power with the Prince. Special arrangements were made to balance the educated and the uneducated classes. There were two reforming parties: one, known later as the Radicals, who believed in the decentralisation of government according to the peculiar genius of the Slavs, and who desired a Russian alliance; and the other, afterwards known as the Progressives, who believed in evolution along the centralised lines of the Western Powers.

Unfortunately, internal differences did not

end here. Prince Milan, as he grew up, showed that a Western education had done little for him but teach him Western vices. His gambling debts brought Serbia under a financial cloud, and his quarrels with his Russian wife, Queen Nathalie, became a public scandal, and assumed political importance, the Russophiles siding with the Queen. Milan adopted the attitude of an Austrophile, the Austrians having promised to maintain him on the throne. Indeed, Austria began to exercise over Serbia the influence of a suzerain, and it is not impossible that she hoped by diplomatic moves to establish over Serbia a protectorate that would develop into a closer bond. There was little of the patriot in Milan, and he developed a kind of fanatical distrust for the country he had wronged. "For the love of God and your son," he wrote to Queen Nathalie, "do not trust the Serbs." The Queen gave the spirited answer: "It is not the business of a king to distrust his people, nor to exploit them; but to live and die with them." Such sentiments only amused Milan. To get money he sold to Austria rights that were essential to his country. He wantonly provoked the enmity of the Bulgarians. "It was," says Denis, "a sort of wild orgy in which the king, like a vicious child, took a mischievous pleasure in dragging his people in the mud." Much of Europe only knew of Serbia in connection with his scandals, and the effect was lamentable.

The tragedy of Michael's death thus became more apparent as the years went on. It was unlucky for Serbia that this should be the very time that the attention of Europe was focused upon the Near East, owing to the unrest among the Christian populations in Turkey, and that these should be the years in which the most momentous changes were to take place in the Balkans. Had the stability of Serbia offered a sufficient contrast to the instability of Turkey, had not her whole situation been prejudiced by the murder of Michael and by the notoriety of her new monarch, the subsequent history of the peninsula might have been written differently.

The thunder-clouds in Turkey rose slowly, and the first thunder-clap came in 1875, in Herzegovina, where the wretched peasants were driven to desperation by the demands of tax-gatherers after the failure of the 1874 crops. The insurrection broke out to the cry of "Kossovo," and it spread at once to Bosnia. The terrible condition of these provinces during the years that preceded the outbreak have been eloquently described by Miss Irby. She tells us that there were taxes of one-eighth to the Governor, one-third or one-half to the Bey, taxes for exemption from military service, taxes for pigs, cattle, and everything "you have or have not." One informant said: "I have seen men driven into pigsties and shut up there in cold and hunger till they paid; hung from the rafters with their

heads downwards in the smoke, until they disclosed where their little stores were hidden. I have known them hung from trees and water poured down them in the freezing cold ; I have known them fastened barefoot to run behind the Bey's cart ; I have known women and maidens working in the fields suffer the extreme of brutal violence or be carried off to Turkish houses. If we complained or reported we were imprisoned or put to death." Justice was a byword : " the Kadi gives the evidence, the Kadi is the judge," is a well-known proverb dating from this time. There was not a bookshop in the province of Bosnia except the depôt of the British and Foreign Bible Society at Sarayevo, and it is on record that a Bosnian merchant who tried to stock Serbian books had to give them up to the Turkish authorities. Complaints were made by the Turks to the Austrian consulate when one of its officials showed newspapers to a Bosnian.

In other parts of Turkey-in-Europe the state of Christian populations was much the same. " In the Serb provinces under Turkish rule there was not at the time of our visit one printing-press, nor a single higher school." The eagerness of the people for histories of their nation was pathetic. The story of the neighbouring province of Serbia was to these oppressed people a wonderful romance, and to talk of it was " open sesame " to their hearts. Of Old Serbia, Miss Irby wrote :

“Here, day by day, the passing rayah prays that God will hasten the hour when a Christian army shall cross the mountains to deliver Old Serbia, and to redeem what their fathers lost on the old battle-plain of Kossovo.” It is not to be wondered at that the spirit of revolt spread in the Balkans like a prairie fire. It awakened even Bulgaria, where there was not much question of direct oppression owing to the enlightened rule of the Governor, but where Turkish refugees from the Caucasus were creating a state of affairs something like that in Serbia in 1803.

Vengeance was wreaked on the insurgent provinces. In his report about Bulgaria, Baring, the British Commissioner, described the atrocities committed by the Turks “as perhaps the most heinous crime that has stained the history of the present century.” In Bosnia the tale of torture beggars description. More than one-third of the population fled the country. Sir Arthur Evans describes the refugees as a “squalid, half-naked swarm of women and children and old men, with faces literally eaten away with hunger and disease.” “After seeing every moral mutilation,” he goes on to say, “that centuries of tyranny could inflict, . . . who can go away without a feeling of despair for the present generation of refugee Bosnia? Who might not be tempted to doubt whether a future still existed for these degraded pariahs?” Miss Irby and her friends tried to minister

to the wants of the refugees, supplying food and starting schools for the children. Sir A. Evans, who watched the experiment with great interest, remarked : " There is a hungering and a thirsting after knowledge among these little ones which seems to me quite pathetic."

Europe was interested, and the three emperors tried to get the Porte to carry out reforms. England, acting under the spell of Disraeli's Turcophil policy, gave them no support at first. Owing to the paralysing effect of conflicting interests the representatives of the Powers did little but pass pious resolutions, while they were fooled to the top of their bent by the Porte, whose stock-in-trade of promises was as copious as ever.

But the heroic struggle going on so near them stirred the people of Montenegro and Serbia to the depths. Here their compatriots were, in the year of grace 1875, where the Serbians had been in 1803. Prince Nicholas considered that the moment had arrived to restore the old Serbian Empire. Milan was driven into the fight by the enthusiasm of his people, realising that it was as much as his throne was worth to keep out of it while Peter of the Kara George line was fighting in Bosnia with the zest of a true patriot.

It seemed, however, a forlorn cause upon which they entered, and it had become more forlorn through the delays caused by the vacillations of Milan. Bulgaria's effort had

been drowned in blood. She was too crushed to rise again. Greece and Rumania held aloof, contrary to expectations. The Montenegrins began with some success, but the Serbians were outnumbered and pressed back in the direction of Kraguyevatz, and the Turks—commanded by the famous general, Osman Pacha—soon held the Morava valley and commanded the road to Beograd.

An appeal was sent to the Powers, and the moment proved opportune. The British public had been stirred by the "Bulgarian atrocities," and the *Daily News* was of the opinion that if the only alternative in the Balkans was for the Christian provinces to remain in the hands of Turkey or to go to Russia, they had better go to Russia. Gladstone and his adherents roused the country to such indignation that diplomatic indifference become no longer possible, and the British Foreign Secretary telegraphed to Constantinople "that any renewal of the outrages would be more fatal to the Porte than the loss of a battle."

Public opinion allowed Russia to handle the situation with determination, and, protected by her, Serbia was able to withdraw from the fight without loss of territory. But Bosnia refused to be pacified. It is true that the Porte promised her a Constitution; but the words in which the promises were couched inspired little confidence, and gave much food for reflection even to the Powers. "It is all

right and very good," wrote the Porte; "the Turk rules as before, and the rayah remains rayah. The Sultan, the Brother of the Sun, the Cousin of the Moon, Bond-brother of the Stars, the Friend of Allah, etc., and Lord of the Earth under the Sky, has commanded of those kings who came to him at Stamboul that they shall drive back for us our rayah into our lands again, and has decreed that whosoever is not obedient on his return shall be put to death." This decree was a thunderbolt to the Bosnian insurgents, who had dreamed of practical independence with Serbia and Montenegro. "What will become of us now?" they asked. "Do the Powers want to force us again under Turkish rule? What Power would have the conscience to wish or dare to drive us back again under the Turkish sword, to ignore or forget the two years' struggle, and again to hand us over into slavery? Better we should slay our wives and children and all seek death among the bands of haiduks. Behold," they said, "the selfishness and inhumanity of Europe."¹

If one Power at this moment was moved to feelings of sincere emotion, it was Russia, and when peace by agreement failed, in spite of all the efforts of Great Britain to avert a war between Turkey and Russia, she came in on the side of her "little brothers" of Bosnia. She was helped by the Montenegrins, and in

¹ See *Slavonic Provinces of Turkey*, by Miss Irby and Miss Mackenzie.

course of time Rumania and Serbia joined up. Bulgaria became the chief theatre of war.

Montenegro was successful in cutting her way to the sea, and seized Spizza, Bar (Antivari) and Ultziny (Dulcigno). Her ecstasies at the victory of Nikshitch are described as something almost impossible for us to understand. Serbia won the battle of Pirot, and Milan entered the old Serbian town of Nish in triumph. Russia met with a serious check at Plevna, whose heroic defence was one of the chief features of the war, but she finally won through to near Adrianople. The Greek provinces of Turkey were beginning to rise, and Greece herself seemed on the eve of joining up. Enemies threatened the Porte on all sides.

Great Britain watched the course of events with consternation. She considered that her lines of communication with India were about to be threatened, and her fleet was ordered to Constantinople, and lay within a few miles of the Russian armies. This demonstration did not at once have the desired effect on the Russians, and it was only after it was withdrawn that an armistice was signed between the belligerents.

This action of Great Britain made, however, a strong impression, and peace was signed at San Stefano. The terms of the new treaty proved so unsatisfactory to nearly every one concerned that they had to be revised by the Congress of Berlin (1878), which was the scene

of a great diplomatic struggle between the Powers. To understand it, it is necessary to cast a backward glance at the general international situation that gave rise to it, as well as the particular situation in the Balkans.

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The two Powers naturally most interested in the Balkans, as we have seen, were those whose frontiers marched with those of Turkey—that is, Russia and Austria. Russia certainly coveted the port of Constantinople as her natural outlet to the sea. That she would have liked to extend her empire over all the South Slavs is not improbable; in the event of that being impossible, she wished to see them free alike from Turkey and Austria. But she was not averse from compromises, and the agreement of a century before between Russia and Austria to share the Balkan spoils was repeated, as we shall see, in 1876.

Great Britain was alive to the Russian danger, but she did not scent peril from Austria. The situation in Austria baffled the intelligences of statesmen because they regarded her as apart from Germany—indeed, as having interests that clashed with those of Germany. She had been excluded from the Germanic Federation after her defeat by the Prussians, and desire for vengeance was expected to be a feature of her policy for some time. As she was also the hereditary foe of Turkey, Russia, and Italy, and suffered in-

ternally from racial problems, it was felt that Austria could expand in the Balkans with less danger to the balance of power than any other Power.

The effect of this policy of the balance of power on the Balkans was lamentable: it produced instability. Any Balkan element that might bring strength to any particular Power was curbed by other interested Powers, combinations were sedulously discouraged, divisions artificially fostered. Thus, in the early 'seventies, a Russian statesman persuaded Turkey to give Bulgaria an Exarchate. Natural evolution had been on the point of bringing Slav-speaking Bulgaria into line with Serbia and other Serbian States, but the foundation of an independent Church roused her dormant sense of individuality. Foreign politicians added fuel to the fire. The Bulgarians had lost all knowledge of who they were. They were informed that they had a glorious past, that they were fitting rivals for other Balkan States. Thus another sword was brought into the peninsula, and by such artificial means a situation was created such as had existed when the Turks conquered it. Turkey favoured the dividing processes. She expected the longer to keep her hold over the distracted provinces. The Powers most interested approved. As to Great Britain, she was afraid to risk the possibility of a great South Slav Power, much as it would have suited her purposes had it remained independent. The

close union between it and Russia which might result would make Russia irresistible in the Near East.

Meanwhile, all the conflicting interests of Europe were being manipulated by one statesman, to whom other statesmen were as marionettes, and in one sense—the aggrandisement of Prussia. That man was Bismarck. In the racial question in Austria he found occasion for moulding that empire to his purposes. Austrian Germans and Magyars were both determined on one point, that if justice to all according to modern democratic notions meant Slav leadership, justice to Slavs there should not be. All protests of Slavs against oppression were officially interpreted as the kicking of a barbaric people against the pricks of civilisation. Any desire for Slav unity was represented as Pan-Slavism, the bogey that finally scattered the wits of British diplomats in 1878. In 1867, after the defeat of Austria by Prussia, and the consequent weakening of the German element in Austria, Austria and Hungary formed a Dual Monarchy. Thus the hegemony of the Empire hung in the balance between them.

Out of these complications, which are here but roughly indicated, Bismarck made capital. It was the war with Prussia that had been instrumental in increasing the power of Hungary. The Magyars therefore felt no inclination to quarrel over the lost Austrian hegemony in the Germanic Confederation.

Bismarck sedulously encouraged them to take the lead in the Austrian Empire, as being less likely than the German Austrians to reopen a vexed question. They were flattered by their new rôle, and played into Germany's hands.

Bismarck's dream was of a Central Germanic Power stretching from Ostend to Constantinople. To achieve this, Austria-Hungary was to be ruled by the policy of the "*Drang nach Osten*" (Eastern Push), while Germany was to prepare herself for "*Herrschaft über Land und Meer*" (Dominion over land and sea). The first step in the game was the wresting of Alsace-Lorraine from France, and a second war between Germany and France was probably only prevented in 1875 by the diplomatic action of Russia and Great Britain. The same year came the Balkan crisis.

It is related that Bismarck once said that Austria-Hungary was a cow to be grazed on the Balkan fields; when she had grazed enough she must be killed for the profit of Germany. Probably his idea was this: Austria's new possessions would make her so predominately Slav that the only possibility of Austro-German hegemony would be union with Germany proper. In 1876, in the midst of the insurrections in Turkey, the Emperor of Austria and the Tsar of Russia met at Reichstadt, and it was agreed between them that Austria was to have a free hand in the

western half of the Balkans in return for allowing Russia a free hand in the eastern half. The diplomats of the Dual Monarchy probably knew that whereas Austria's advance would be permitted by Great Britain, Russia's would not, and that it was quite safe for them to permit what others would veto.

Then came the Treaty of San Stefano between Russia and Turkey. Its terms were surprising. Bulgaria, which had sunk under Turkish rule with hardly a shadow of resistance, and which had been dragged into national life again for diplomatic purposes, was to be reconstructed somewhat on the lines of the Great Bulgaria that had had a brief day of glory in medieval times. The new state was to include Eastern Rumelia and a large part of Macedonia. Serbia was to have an increase of territory that would bring her almost into touch with Montenegro, and the last token of her former servitude, the crescent that flew beside her tricolour, was to disappear for ever. Montenegro was to be about trebled in size and to have ports. Russia's idea was to create a strong power in the Eastern Balkans that would stretch from the Black Sea to Albania across the Vardar valley, and cut off Austria from Salonica. Judging by the agreement at Reichstadt, she had given up the idea that Serbia would lead the Balkans to her feet, and she wished for another state to have the hegemony of the Balkans given by the possession of the Vardar

watercourse—one that would owe her very existence to her, and which might, if hard pressed from the west, become her vassal. The Bulgarian arrangement was a great injustice to Serbia, which had every right to expect to be looked upon as the leader of the Christian states in Turkey, not only by virtue of her past, but on account of her heroic and prolonged struggle for independence, which had made the emancipation of the others a practical question.

The only people satisfied with the new arrangements were the Russians and the Bulgarians. As we have already seen, such was the chorus of indignation with which it was hailed that the Powers decided that there must be a revision of the treaty.

Bismarck, who declared that the Balkans were not worth the loss of a Pomeranian grenadier, offered himself as "honest broker," representing the only disinterested Power! The Congress called to decide the new terms was held at Berlin, and he presided. It was preceded by diplomatic intrigues on an enormous scale. Prior to it Great Britain signed a secret treaty with the Turks that established her as their protector. In return she got Cyprus as a *point d'appui* for her fleet. Serbia secured some support from Austria by promising commercial facilities and the building of a railway in her territory that would join up Austria and Turkey.

The terms of the Treaty of Berlin aimed at

creating a situation in the Balkans that would frustrate Russia's ambitions. Bosnia and Herzegovina were still to belong to Turkey, but they were to be occupied and administered by Austria instead of having the autonomy promised by the Treaty of San Stefano. Austria was also to garrison the Sandjak of Novi-Pazar, and have the right to construct commercial and strategic roads there. Thus Austria, who had borne none of the brunt of the recent fighting, got the thin edge of her wedge into the Balkans, put her garrisons between Montenegro and Serbia in territory that had been the cradle of the Serbian race (the Sandjak of Novi-Pazar was the ancient Rascia), and had a funnel of influence provided in the direction of Albania. Serbia, Montenegro and Rumania were to be recognised as independent. Serbia was to have the Vranje, Toplitza, Pirot and Nish districts; Rumania, the Dobrudja. Montenegro was to have her territory doubled instead of trebled; she was to give up Ultziny to the Albanians and Spizza to the Austrians, who had never before possessed it. Montenegrin waters were "shut to the ships of war of all nations," and the little state was to have neither fleet nor naval flag. The policing of her coasts was to be in the hands of Austria, and she was not to build railways in her new territory without the consent of Austria. Thus the economic domination of the country was ensured, the nucleus of a South Slav navy prevented, and

any possibility of Bar being used by the Russian fleet anticipated. The Bulgaria of the San Stefano treaty was divided into three parts. Macedonia remained in the same position as before, an outrage to humanity, and Bulgaria proper and Eastern Rumelia achieved autonomy under different conditions. Russia's acquisitions were reduced as far as possible.

The wishes of the populations suffering under the Turkish régime had been one of the least of the preoccupations of the Powers, as was soon shown by the armed resistance of Bosnia to her occupation by Austria, and the inhumanity of Europe made a profound and lamentable impression upon all South Slavs.

Andrássy, on his return from Berlin, greeted the Austrian Emperor with the words: "Your Majesty, the door of the Balkans is now open to you." But the Russian delegate, Prince Gorchakov, had sounded a note of warning to Andrássy. "Bosnia and Herzegovina," he said, "will prove the grave of Austria-Hungary."

Thus were put in motion the forces that were destined to produce the European War. It remained to be seen whether Andrássy or Gorchakov was right.

CHAPTER IX

THE SPIRIT OF THE SERB

THE sympathy of England for the Greeks at the time of their Revolution was sentimental and practical. The Young Italy movement evoked the same enthusiasm. But the Serbian quest for liberty in the last century never inspired the same feelings in Great Britain.

The reason is not far to seek. Englishmen have been brought up for centuries in the cult of Greek and Roman classics and medieval Italian art. Though new Greece had inherited little of old Greece except its territory, they argued that a race capable of such gifts to the world had a right to independence—that what it had achieved once it could achieve again, given the same chance. It was the same with Italy.

The case of the South Slavs was different. Few Englishmen knew anything of their origin, still less of their achievements, and they were sceptical as to their capacity for civilisation. A little information might have brought enlightenment and aroused sympathy, but few people were interested enough to seek it. Indeed, correct information was difficult to obtain, and political bias tended to produce apologists for Turkey at the expense of Serbia.

The history of the Serbs under Turkish rule was that of the stultification of a nation, a mental and moral maiming. Therefore Serbia is not so much to be judged by her achievements, great as these have been considering her handicaps, but rather by her potentialities, by the fair promise of her medieval days before the Turkish conquest arrested her development, and also by what her more fortunate compatriots became in the little Republic of Dubrovnik, which never fell under Turkish rule, and maintained its independence till 1808. The process may be intricate, but we owe it to a wronged nation to master its intricacies.

We are told how, in the sixth century, Slav prisoners captured by Byzantines were asked to tell who they were. "We are Slavs," they said, "from the far-off sea. We know nothing of steel nor arms, we graze our herds, make music with our pipes, and do no harm to any one." Their only weapons on this occasion were their pipes! Chance has turned them from herdsmen into warriors. They are always ready to revert to the original type, if allowed to work out their own salvation in their own way.

One of the most deeply rooted characteristics of Slav genius is its sentimentality, and its strongly developed reverence for family life. Every foreigner who has lived in Russia has been struck by the many manifestations of this feeling, and most convincing proofs of

it are cited in reports and books published by British women who were in Serbia during the present war, and who had unique opportunities of observing the character of the Serbian soldier-peasant.

Before the Turkish invasion, the development of the race was proceeding along normal lines. Their civilisation compared well with that of Western Europe; their literature was of much the same standard as that of contemporary England. The churches that sprang up in Serbia were many of them beautiful examples of Byzantine and Romanesque architecture, modified by a genius that was all their own. In decorative art they seem to have been far ahead of England. It would appear from the literature that has been handed down on the lips of the people that the mentality of the Serb at the time of the fall was more spiritualised than that of his contemporary Anglo-Saxon. Their Nemanya kings had a strain of deep religious feeling, and some of them showed a tendency, remarkable in kings, to put the conquest of the soul on a higher plane than that of territory. This spirit reflected itself in the mentality of the people.

An old song tells how one day Christian princes came and asked—

“Where have vanished all the vast possessions
Of the great and wealthy Tzar Nemanya?”

St. Sava, his son, answers—

“Never did my father spend his treasures
Buying arms and chargers bold for battle,

No, my father spent his vast possessions
Building white abodes for God's high presence,

Where God's hymns be sung through all the
ages,

Bringing healing to my father's spirit.”

When the night of Turkish rule came, as a literary nation Serbia practically became extinct. It is true that Montenegro imported a printing-press not long after Caxton began his work at Westminster. It was destroyed by the Turks. So were all other printing-presses that had been smuggled into Serbia. But the spirit of the nation expressed itself in a swan song of remarkable beauty, and the folk literature that came into existence on the lips of the people, and had its origin, not in “the heads of the few, but in the hearts of all,” is one of the most remarkable things of its kind in Europe. The peasant went on telling his stories of bygone glory to the accompaniment of the gusla; and it is characteristic of the race that it was not Dushan, the conqueror, that was their favourite hero, but Marko, the rejected, the king's son who ended his days in obscurity, his love of truth having, according to legend, cost his father the throne of Serbia. They loved to tell how Marko's

mother impressed upon him at the turning-point of his life that he must not tell a lie for anybody, not even for his father; that it was better to lose one's head than sin against one's soul. Nowhere, perhaps, is the fundamental teaching of Christianity, that the wrong lies in the spirit, whether or not translated into deeds, more picturesquely expressed than in the mystic words that Vukashin hears after his frenzy of anger against his son: "You have not wounded your son Marko, but you have wounded the angel of God." It records the high-water mark in the popular literary expression of a nation.

The Serbians did a thing which is perhaps unique in the history of nations. They chose for their national day the anniversary of a defeat rather than a victory. All down the five hundred years of struggle since 1389, Kossovo Day has been a day of reconsecration, one on which they revived the memory of a past freedom, and reaffirmed their faith in a future that should not deny to them the ordinary human rights of a free people. To this day the Montenegrins wear a round cap, red at the top, with one corner embroidered in gold, and with a black band. The red stands for the bloody field of Kossovo, the gold for the unconquered Black Mountain (Montenegro), to which the unyielding remnants of an army retired. The black is mourning for that disastrous day.

The Montenegrins remained a free people,

but in the retreat of their mountain fastnesses they were unable to develop a high civilisation. The little Republic of Dubrovnik, however, which remained in touch with the outside world, shared in the glories of the Renaissance, and absorbed what was best in Byzantine and Italian culture. Her literary and artistic efflorescence, which M. Ernest Denis considers one of the most remarkable known to history, earned her the name of the South Slav Athens. Among her scholars were Stephen Gratitch, who became librarian at the Vatican, and Boshkovich, the renowned astronomer, mathematician and physicist. Her poets sang love songs after the manner of Petrarch, and wrote epics in the style of Tasso; but it is noteworthy that in this outburst of literary expression Dubrovnik was not so overpowered by her association with cultured foreign countries as to be blind to the genius of her own race. Italy and the scholars of Constantinople gave her a vehicle. Through it passed the life blood of the Slavs. Her poets saw that for tragedy, for pathos, for heroism, for all the qualities that make a literature, their own race stood second to none. Her greatest poet, Gundulitch, is remembered chiefly for his Slav epic, "Osman," modelled somewhat on the lines of "Jerusalem Delivered." "Your neighbours are slaves," he wrote, "a cruel and terrible power crushes them; with you alone, O Dubrovnik, the sovereign power sits upon a throne of liberty."

In the eighteenth century a Croat Franciscan friar, from Makarska in Dalmatia, Kachitch-Mioshitch, collected what he called "The Popular Talk of the Slavonic People." As Papal Delegate to Bosnia and Herzegovina he had great opportunities of picking up knowledge of the songs which he had heard sung to the note of the gusla in the cottage homes which he visited. This was the most popular book of a secular nature hitherto published in the Slav language, and it first inspired Vuk Karadzhitch with an interest in national traditions.

The art and architecture of Dubrovnik, and also of her neighbour port of Trogir (Trau), have been the wonder of travellers. "The Dalmatian coast," says Freeman, "may hold its head high among the artistic regions of the world." The old palace he describes as "one of the fairest triumphs of human skill within the range of the builder's art."

From the commercial point of view Dubrovnik was a miniature Venice, and had trading marts in various Balkan towns. Her ship-building yards were to the Middle Ages what those of Northumberland and the Clyde are to the world to-day. The most powerful argosies in the Spanish Armada hailed from Dubrovnik, and in 1596 we hear of a naval battle in the Indian Ocean between twelve of her three-masters and a British fleet. From her Latin name, Ragusa, is derived the word "argosy" (ragosy), which figures so much in British

naval poetry. Later, we hear of Cromwell concluding a commercial treaty with the little republic.

The municipal organisation of Dubrovnik, which had the advantage of starting with a Roman structure, is the wonder of sociologists. In the fourteenth century it had a city police and a sanitary board, and it claims to have started the first loan bank and the first founding hospital known to history. In 1415, four centuries before the anti-slavery campaign of Wilberforce, it forbade its people to traffic in slaves, and declared all slaves found on its territory to be free. The vote of the governing body on this occasion gave a majority of seventy-five out of a total of seventy-eight. They declared that they considered "such traffic to be base and contrary to all humanity, and to redound to no small disgrace of our city . . . namely that the human form, made after the image and similitude of our Creator, should be turned to mercenary profit and sold as if it were brute beast."

Dubrovnik made it a point of honour to receive hospitably all hunted refugees. The exiled George Brankovitch came here once in search of peace, but the Turks threatened the city for harbouring him, and her people implored him to go. In 1789 Watkins writes of the inhabitants of Dubrovnik: "They have more learning and less ostentation than any people I know; more politeness to each other and less envy. Their hospitality to the

tranger cannot possibly be exceeded; in short, their general character has in it so few defects that I do not hesitate to pronounce them (as far as my experience of other people will permit me) the wisest, best, and happiest of States."

We hear from another traveller in 1805 that Dubrovnik had no secret police nor gendarmes, and a capital sentence pronounced at the time was the first in twenty-five years. The city went into mourning on account of it, and an executioner had to be imported from Turkey. This was about the time that Serbia's revolution was drowning the country in blood, when massacres by Turks, always a notorious item in Turkish governing programmes, were being avenged in the spirit of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." The Turks crushed civilisation out of Serbia, and suffered themselves the consequences.

In 1808, as Serbia emerged from her night of servitude, so dark that one wonders that it was ever possible for a single generation to do so much towards recovery from its mental and moral maiming, Napoleon declared that the Republic of Dubrovnik no longer existed. In 1815 it came under Austrian rule, and sank into a kind of lethargic slumber—to be awakened about half a century later by a tide of national feeling that swept to the remotest corner of the scattered nation.

Meanwhile, there was a growing literary activity in one spot after another among the

Serbs and Croats who were not under the Turks. One great obstacle to its progress was the lack of any standard language except the ancient one, now unintelligible to the bulk of the people. It was in his gropings after linguistic reforms that Dositeus Obradovitch did his race much service. He was an Hungarian Serb, born towards the middle of the eighteenth century in the Banat of Temishvar, who, early in life, grasped the significance of the rival alphabets as a disintegrating force. Once in his early days of study at a monastery the abbot found him reading a secular book of doubtful orthodoxy. "Don't you see," he said, "that in the volume half the letters are Latin ones, and do you not know that every book in which there is a single Latin letter is accursed? It is since the time that people began to publish such works that people began to eat snails. If you do not keep clear from such abominations you'll lose the few crumbs of reason that you possess." But a group of priests were growing up with larger vision, and, encouraged by them, Obradovitch began the work of emancipation from the fetishes of alphabets. He, too, saw the necessity of rising above acrimonious religious divisions. "The Turkish power falls and the Christian power rises . . . Serbia, Bosnia, and Herzegovina will succeed in time in shaking off the Mussulman yoke, provided the people free themselves from their own prejudices and forget the inveterate and impious hatreds pro-

duced by differences of religion. Without that they will be their own Turks and their own executioners ! ”

Obradovitch, like other distinguished Slavs from Southern Hungary, came to Serbia to help the young state with his learning and experience. He became the instructor of Kara George's children and a member of the senate, and, later, Minister of Education in Serbia. He died in 1811—before Serbia was entirely emancipated.

It is interesting to remember that he is one of the few Serbs of the time who had any first-hand knowledge of England. He was a great traveller, and when in this country came under the influence of Dr. William Fordyce. He always expressed a profound admiration for the genius of Great Britain.

His work of literary emancipation was carried on by the great scholar, Vuk Karadzhitich, who reformed the alphabet and made it phonetic, introducing for the purpose the Latin j. A howl of indignation greeted his efforts, and his literary work was proscribed for many years by the older generation, and only in 1868, after a long struggle, was liberty of spelling recognised in Serbia. But, when it came, triumph was complete. The country owes him a tremendous debt. He collected and published the national songs and traditions, and his volumes of information about the Serbs brought him the friendship of Goethe, Jacob Grimm, and Ranke, and added

greatly to the prestige of the little country, which now entered the literary fellowship of nations. Karadzhitich did something more—he made one of the Serbian dialects the standard South Slav language, thus focusing the literary activities of the race in a modern language that was intelligible to the people.

The year 1847—in which appeared Vuk's translation of the New Testament in the purest national language, and the scientific Apology for Vuk's reforms, by his pupil, the great linguist Danichitch—saw also the publication of the lyrical poems of the young poet Branko Radichevitch, and of the "Gorski Vijenatz" of Peter Petrovitch Nyegosh, the Montenegrin bishop-prince. Nyegosh combined a fine lyrical sense with a fierce love of freedom, and did much towards promoting that feeling of solidarity among Serbs which is such a marked feature of nineteenth-century politics. "He is my brother, no matter what his religion," is an oft-quoted saying of his. These writers opened the floodgates of modern feelings, and started a new period of Serbian literature in Southern Hungary and Croatia, without which the brilliant productions of Serbia forty years later, centring round Beograd, would have been impossible.

Meanwhile, in the north-west of the Balkans political events had a great effect on local Serbian literature. After Austerlitz, Napoleon took possession of several north-western Slav provinces—Carinthia, Carniola, Goritza,

Istria, the sea coast of Croatia, Dalmatia and the adjacent islands—and united them into a province for which he revived the ancient name of Illyria. Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, who had never been united in one state since the earliest times, were thus brought under one and the same rule. A kind of renaissance followed in every branch of life. Schools were founded, and knowledge of the West disseminated. Nodier, who did much to create a taste for Serbian literature in France, issued a paper in French, Italian and Slavonic, and Lyublyana (Laibach) became a centre of literary activity. When Napoleon fell, the province came into the possession of Austria and was again divided; but the idea of union that had been created did not die. Literary activity shifted, however, to Zagreb (Agram), which had a day of intellectual glory under the spell of Lyudevit Gay. Gay's influence made the Croats do a wonderful thing. They rejected their own particular idiom as a literary language, and took that of Obradovitch and Karadzhitch as their model. Their example was followed (but at first not so unreservedly) by the Slovenes.

The work done by Gay towards the intellectual union of the South Slavs was furthered by a younger man, who had hardly reached manhood when Gay started his famous *Croat Journal* in 1834; but it was prophesied of him at the University of Pest that he would be either the chief heretic of the century or the

chief pillar of the Catholic Church. This man was Strossmayer, of whom a famous diplomat said later : " There are only two eminent men of my time who seemed to me to be different from other men. These are Bismarck and Strossmayer."

Strossmayer became the greatest Slav bishop of modern times. His religion was of a tolerant kind, and he was one of the few religious leaders of his age who believed that religion and science went hand in hand. He spent his money freely in founding schools and subsidising scholars. The Southern Slav Academy at Zagreb, which was " destined to give a common impulse to the intellectual movement " among the South Slavs, owed its foundation partly to him. It was opened by him in 1867, and in his address on that occasion he answered the jibes of the detractors who had accused him of squandering the revenues of the Church on worldly objects. " Thanks be to God," he said, " I am not the sole culprit : I have as my accomplices the whole clergy to the very last man. This clergy know that all that is done for the faith is profitable to science, and that all that is done for science is to the advantage of the faith. . . . We shall develop with all our powers all those interests which affect the material and moral progress of our people, its existence and its future." One great object of his life was to put his own people on an intellectual footing with other races, and to

further the unity amongst them which was necessary to this purpose.

The spontaneous impetus towards national development among the different branches of the South Slavs in the nineteenth century, of which we quote but a few instances, is one of the chief forces to be reckoned with in the history of the Balkans. They all became gradually focused in Serbia, when once that kingdom became organised on a stable basis. About the end of the century Beograd became the literary home of the nation and the place to which all Yugoslav aspirations inclined to gravitate. Local literary centres, such as Novi-Sad in Bachka, with the oldest Serbian literary society (Matitza-Srpska); Sarayevo in Bosnia; Dubrovnik and Cettinje, acknowledged one by one her supremacy, and even Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, and Lyublyana, the capital of Slovenia, with distinctly developed traits of their own, looked upon her at last as the leading representative of the genius of their nation. The steely determination to reach the goal of national development that other nations, more happily circumstanced, had reached already, finds exalted expression in the poet, Yovan Yovanovitch Zmay.

“ He who would turn and with discerning eye
Look at these graves of the heroic dead,
Milestones of history, may see how down
The years from age to age, father has called
To son, and warrior to warrior :

‘Fall in. Fill up the ranks from which I
fell.

What I could not, that shall ye do. Where I
Came not, there shall ye go. What I began
Is yours to end.’ . . .

And from each grave and from each star of
heaven

Whispers the spirit of the race : ‘Behold
A generation young and full of fire,
New buds that burst upon a hoary tree,’
.

This youth doth ever commune with the
grave.

‘And thou, my brother, art thou fallen
too?’

‘Nay, say not so, while you have life, I
live.’

‘Ah, but the fight was bitter.’ ‘Say not so.
It was a glorious fight. Taste of its sweets.’

‘And yet what wouldst thou? What the
goal thou seekst?’

‘A goal that we must reach.’ ‘And is faith
strong

Enough?’ ‘Stronger than tyranny is faith.’

‘How few of us would dare!’ ‘A force
immense

Will drive you.’ ‘Tell me, may the goal be
reached

By one alone?’ ‘Never by one who
doubts.’”

Travellers in the Balkans are amazed, and

lovers of the *status quo* are exasperated, by the capacity of this people to talk of five hundred years ago as if it were yesterday, and at the faith that makes them believe that their brilliant yesterday will have an even more brilliant morrow—however long the night.

CHAPTER X

AUSTRIAN INTRIGUES TO PREPARE FOR THE “DRANG NACH OSTEN”

ALREADY, at the meeting of the Russian and Austrian Emperors at Reichstadt, Austria had won an important move in the diplomatic game connected with the Balkans. Russia promised that Serbia should not get Bosnia. It would be too great a menace to Austria, said Andrassy, running as it did as a wedge between Dalmatia, Croatia and Slavonia. Sooner than consent to it he would *annex Serbia*. A year later he said that Serbia and Rumania might remain independent, but they must not grow. To stop their growth Austria would go to war without hesitation. Russia would know better than to interfere. If she did not, Austria's military position would assure her the advantage. Prussia would be with her. She was sure of that.

It was obvious from these conversations, which only became public property at a later

date, that there was already an understanding between Austria and Prussia, carefully dissimulated from the Powers, lest they should "smell a rat" before the Congress of Berlin.

Seldom have diplomats been more ignorant of the real lie of the land than those who unconsciously played the game of the Germanic Powers in 1878. A change had come over the face of European diplomacy in the hands of Bismarck, and they were unaware of it. They chained up the Russian bear, and let loose the Germanic pestilence from which it might have saved them. With all the Powers against her in 1878, the weakness of Russia was so great that she agreed to raise no objections if Austria found herself forced to occupy the Sandjak of Novi-Pazar as she had occupied Bosnia, and her statesmen told Serbia that she had better make up her mind to bow to circumstances, and take care, in her own interest, not to countenance any Serb propaganda in the Austrian dominions. Meanwhile, Serbia was bound to construct railways in her own country for the convenience of Austria.

When the chessboard of Europe was thus arranged in favour of the Germanic Powers, Germany and Austria drew up a formal secret treaty (1879) by which Germany was pledged to protect Austria from Russia.

Their plans developed with the years. In 1886 a Pan-German League was formed ostensibly to encourage colonial expansion, but it

had less legitimate implications. Not only were all Germans to be gathered into one fold, but non-Germans within it were to be Germanised. Central Europe was to become a commercial and military unit, and German influence was to follow the railway lines to Bagdad.

As for Turkey, the Austrian view about that Power was summed up in 1907 by Baron Chlumetzky. "We must always have free access to the Mediterranean. In Macedonia as in Albania we must take care that no other Power shall obtain the direction of its people, and see that the road to Salonica remains completely open, free from all foreign influence. Salonica, the continental port nearest to the Suez Canal, is our only door upon the Mediterranean. The Austrian wants a domain where he can find scope without having to leave his country. We do not desire territorial conquest, but we want to be sure that we, and we alone, shall be called to the death-bed of the sick man, because it is to us that rightfully belongs the guardianship of certain of his heirs, still minors." This was merely a diplomatic wording, full of ambiguities and contradictions, of what Crown-Prince Rudolf said in the early 'eighties to his consort, Princess Stéphanie, when on a visit to Constantinople: "Here shall you reign as Empress."

It gradually became evident that the Germanic political and economic spheres were to include all land between Hungary and the

Persian Gulf. The Germans were to become the great naval power and the great world power. A pre-war German pamphlet contains the astonishing words: "We can become Europe." There were ravings of the "supreme morality of war," the "manure of culture." The Kaiser said: "Him who opposes me I will crush." "The Emperor of the Atlantic greets the Emperor of the Pacific."

But there was method in the madness with which the Germanic Powers attempted to achieve their results. Bulgaria was weaned from Russia, a prince was found for her in Vienna—Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg. Under him Russophil agitations were severely dealt with, and propaganda among Serbs and Greeks in Macedonia was encouraged. Then there was the economic wooing of Turkey, facilitated by railways through Serbia; the fostering of discontent with Great Britain's commercial supremacy and her interfering habits. British statesmen became conscious that the diplomacy that had brought about the Treaty of Berlin was ill-advised. Cyprus was a white elephant, and they paid tribute for it to Turkey. The Armenian massacres continued, for Turkey could afford to be arrogant with Germany behind.

Serbia was naturally a special object of Germanic attentions, and in Prince Milan Austria had a ready tool. He spent many months of the year at Vienna, where gambling seems to have been a main attraction. He

signed secret treaties with Austria which had sinister bearing on the position of the South Slavs. Austria promised to help Serbia to extend her territory southwards in the direction of Macedonia (it diverted Serbian attention from Bosnia, and meant collision with Bulgaria), while in return Milan promised not to tolerate South Slav propaganda, and in case of war to open to Austrian troops both Beograd and Nish, the northern and southern keys of the State. In 1882 Milan declared Serbia to be a kingdom. Russia was incensed, and so were his own people. It exasperated them to think that the prince who had disgraced them should be their first king.

The next significant Balkan event was the union of Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia. King Milan posed as the defender of the Treaty of Berlin, and declared war at the instigation of Austria, who wished to aim a blow at the rising power of Bulgaria, and preferred to do it by proxy. With the Serbs the war was unpopular, and they were easily defeated at Slivnitsa, contrary to all expectations. Austria was alarmed, and hurried to the diplomatic rescue. Through her influence Serbia retained all her territory, and was more in the power of Austria than ever.

Milan came home a discredited warrior, and his domestic relations and the divorce of Queen Nathalie made him, if that were possible, more unpopular than ever. In 1888, to appease the people, he promulgated a new

constitution, which made the ministers responsible to the Skupshtina, which was to be elected by universal suffrage. The Skupsh-tina also gained control of the budget, and liberty of the Press was guaranteed. The next year Milan abdicated, feeling convinced that he could not work with the party in power.

His son Alexander, then thirteen, came to the throne, and the country was governed by a regency, in which Ristitch had chief power. The young king had been brought up in a storm centre, domestic and political, which did not cease with his accession, for Milan and Nathalie both reappeared in Beograd with antagonistic influences and endless intrigues. The Regency tried to keep a firm hold on Alexander, but their suspicious watchfulness weighed upon his mind, and he grew up with a tendency to melancholia. He was at the same time a youth of strong passions and weak will. At the age of sixteen he declared himself of age, and ordered the arrest of his ministers, who were dining with him. It is true that they had been acting in a most unconstitutional manner, but things were no better under the new régime. The State became nearly bankrupt, and the salaries of officials could not be paid. The rest of the reign was a drama of coups d'état, and the Government rarely, if ever, represented the wishes of the people. It is noteworthy that the unpopularity of Alexander's ministers in

Serbia was little in comparison with their unpopularity in the neighbouring Croatia and in the South Slav districts of Hungary, where their national significance was gauged with the accuracy of a barometer. In 1900 Alexander increased his difficulties, national and international, by marrying his mistress, Draga Mashin, a woman many years older than himself and of a questionable past. Milan, who disapproved, was banished, and died in 1901. Under Draga's influence things went from bad to worse. While her arrogance was intolerable to those who were high in the land, she shocked the sensibilities of the poorer classes by her profanation of all that they held most holy in family life. As there was no prospect of her having a child, she tried to have one of her brothers, young officers of no distinction, recognised as heir, but not till she had scandalised the nation by a simulated accouchement. The country was roused to such a pitch of excitement that a catastrophe was felt to be imminent. To many it seemed that there was but one alternative: either the nation or the king must die. They considered that abdication was not enough: rival dynasties had split the country from the moment it had emerged into semi-independence.

On a dark night in June, 1903, the gates of the royal palace were blown up, and a number of conspirators entered the building. The king and queen, and some of their supporters, were assassinated under circumstances which

many people all over the world still remember vividly.

It was just that these murders should evoke the strongest feelings of indignation, and this they did, both at home and abroad. That the whole people should be condemned for them in foreign countries amounts almost to a freak of psychology, since other nations have committed political crimes without the wholesale condemnation of the innocent. It is partly to be explained by the fact that most people knew nothing else about Serbia. Among the better informed there was a tendency to think that, because the people accepted the revolution, they therefore approved of the murders. This was an erroneous impression.

It was felt in many countries that it would be long before Serbia could recover her national prestige, and even Abdul Hamid, who had attempted the extermination of a race, and was responsible for the massacre of something like 300,000 Armenians, lifted his hands in holy horror. Nevertheless, as Denis has aptly expressed it: "History, whose duty it is to brand assassins, reserves its supreme condemnation for the princes who had reduced their country to such a state of moral indigence that she saw no hope of salvation except in crime."

Peter Karageorgevitch was now asked to be king, and consented after some hesitation. Austria and Russia recognised him at once,

but Great Britain severed diplomatic relations till such time as the last of the murderers should have retired from public life. For many years King Peter's position was a difficult one, owing to the fact that some of his supporters were naturally connected with the coup d'état.

The psychological moment seemed to have arrived for the Germanic "Eastern Push"; but the situation was a complicated one, and there was every reason for Austrian statesmen to believe that if to-day were good, to-morrow would be better.

Great changes had taken place in European politics since 1878. Great Britain was alive to the Germanic peril: she knew that in her darkest South African days the Kaiser had tried to get France and Russia to unite with him against her. The fact that Russia, as well as France, had declined to do so, naturally led to more friendly relations between the two Powers that had so long distrusted each other. Therein, in the eyes of the Germanic Powers, lay a great danger, and the diplomacy of the Austrian ambassador at Petrograd, Aehrenthal, was concentrated on making difficulties between Russia and Great Britain. He had his share in bringing about the Russo-Japanese war, in which it was expected that England would be involved as the ally of Japan, and France as the ally of Russia. But this diplomacy was a signal failure. It is true that Russia entered upon a disastrous

war, but the fighting was localised. France and Great Britain agreed to pair, and laid the foundations of the Entente. Further, Russia was impressed by the fact that Great Britain was sincere in the diplomatic representations by which she had tried to avert war, and had every reason to suspect the motives of the German diplomatists who had persuaded her that Japan was only bluffing. Thus, instead of a conflagration in Europe that would have given them opportunities to snatch many plums in the Balkans and elsewhere, the Germanic Powers produced an understanding between the very countries they had wished to pit against one another.

These were the main currents in European politics, but events were often deflected from their natural courses by undercurrents. The mutual suspicions and jealousies of Austria and Germany often upset calculations, and so did the varying ideals of different statesmen—especially in Austria, where terror of expansion was felt by many Magyars. They feared that if the Imperialist policy were successful they would find themselves between the upper and nether millstones of German and Slav. Moreover, internal affairs demanded prudence, for the frenzied attempt of the Magyars to magyarise the Slavs in their power, in order to make their own position unassailable, had only succeeded in making that race more determined than ever to preserve its identity.

Such was the position of affairs in the years

immediately following the accession of King Peter. From the year 1903 events began to march quickly in the Balkans.

Austria had probably believed that it was only necessary to give Serbia enough rope to hang herself, and that, at any moment convenient to herself, internal affairs in Serbia were likely to offer sufficient excuse for intervention. But the unexpected happened. The new king had learned much in the school of adversity; his chief ministers, Milovanovitch and Pashitch, were men of exceptional ability; and the Serbs showed their usual powers of recuperation. The king had grasped in exile the meaning of a constitutional monarchy, and the Government was run on truly constitutional lines, and really represented the will of the people. Peter was the first Serbian monarch who refused to be a partisan. Many stories are told of his determination to respect the feeling of all his subjects who favoured the Obrenovitches. His progressive tendencies are proved by the fact that he translated John Stuart Mill's *Liberty* into Serbian. Under the new régime finances were put on a proper working basis, the army was reorganised, trade began to thrive, and good relations were promoted with other Balkan States. In 1906 such good feeling had grown up between Serbia and Bulgaria that a Customs' Treaty was arranged between them. Austria was incensed and behaved as if Serbia were still in the state of quasi-dependency to which

Milan and Alexander had reduced her. She commanded the Beograd Government to abandon the treaty, confident that Serbia was economically dependent on her good will. But Serbia neither yielded nor succumbed. Instead, she found other markets when Austria shut her trade doors to her, and the celebrated "pig war" brought such an accession of economic credit to Serbia that Austria awoke to the fact that the Eastern Push must begin soon if she did not wish Serbia to grow into a position to check it for ever.

In 1907 Austria's moderate Foreign Minister, Goluchowski, a man of uprightness and common sense, retired, partly owing to the attitude of the German Emperor towards him. He had been criticised by Imperialists for not taking advantage of Russian and Serbian difficulties to further Austrian interests in the Balkans, and he had annoyed Germany by telling her that he did not mean to support her in overseas wars. Aehrenthal, of Petrograd notoriety, succeeded him. He was an Imperialist, and an unscrupulous one, and seemed to have come into office with a desire to make things hum, and to promote Austria to the senior partnership of the Triple Alliance. His intrigues were concerned both with home and foreign policy, and he prepared the way for further dominion over the Slavs by attempts to discredit them which did not stop at the use of forgeries. But this amazing story belongs to another chapter.

Aehrenthal tried to bring about an alliance between Austria, Germany, Russia, and France, which would have more or less isolated Great Britain, whom the Germanic Powers now regarded as an arch enemy. As spoils, Austria was to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Germany was to get France's support over the Bagdad railway project. Russia was to secure an opening through the Dardanelles, and Germany was to assume a benevolent attitude towards France's aims in Morocco. Seeing that the gains of Austria and Germany were to be immediate, and those of Russia and France were prospective and even problematical, Russia and France declined the proposal.

Meanwhile, affairs in Macedonia led to some curious situations. This province is inhabited by such a mixture of races that the French have given the name of *macédoine* to a dish of which it is difficult to analyse the ingredients. The inhabitants are, however, chiefly Slavs, while near the coast and in large towns there are many Greeks; but, seeing that the Macedonian Slavs speak a language equally allied to Bulgarian and Serbian, it had become difficult in the course of centuries for foreigners to distinguish to whom they belong. The custom in Macedonia of having a patron saint (*slava*) for every household points to the racial identity of the Macedonians with the Serbs, as it is a custom unknown among other Slav races. All might have been well as far as internal racial unity

was concerned if the Bulgarians had not started to inform the Macedonians that they were Bulgarians. The Serbians and the Greeks followed suit by putting the Serbian and Greek cases before them, and between *agents-provocateurs* and rival propagandas Macedonia became a plague-spot of political intrigue, and the Macedonian Slavs became divided into Serbian, Bulgarian and Greek parties. In order to understand this question it is necessary to remember that in this strife the Bulgarians had the advantage of having been first in the field, and of having organised a more thorough system of propaganda. Turkey was notoriously incompetent to deal with such situations : indeed, the spectacle of Christians quarrelling had always been peculiarly gratifying to her. The Powers, therefore, interfered, and Macedonia was divided for the moment into five districts, each to be administered by a different Power. Germany held aloof. She was currying favour with the Turk, as she did at the time of the Armenian massacres, when her Turcophil tendencies did much to paralyse the action of the other Powers. In return she acquired valuable concessions in Asia Minor.

In 1907, Aehrenthal, who had unwillingly fallen in with the internationalisation of interference in Macedonia, bartered Austria's interest in it for permission to build a railway through the Sandjak of Novi-Pazar, and announced in Austria that he was arranging for

a new and important route from Central Europe to Egypt and India. It is possible that the announcement of this project, in reality of little military or economic importance, since the direct road to the East lay through Serbia, was destined to test the alertness of the Powers on the Near East question.

The following year (1908), the Young Turk Revolution took place in Turkey, and Bulgaria and Austria, working in unison, took advantage of the weakness of that empire to further their own designs. Bulgaria declared her independence, and Austria annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina. The indignation of Europe was thoroughly aroused. In Beograd the populace shouted: "Down with Austria." Serbia and Russia both came to the verge of war with Austria. Turkey boycotted Austrian goods. Great Britain was indignant at this way of encouraging the Turkish reforms to which the Powers had been urging Turkey for many decades. Germany was angry because she had not been consulted.

The inner workings of international politics at this moment are still obscure, but it is certain that Germany told Russia that she would back Austria in case of war, and posed afterwards as having thereby been the means of securing the Bosnian plum for her ally without a war. This version of the facts was apparently accepted by Austria, though it is now known that, even before Germany intervened, Russia had decided not to fight. Pos-

sibly Russia, by not showing her hand too soon, was trying to find out whether Germany and Austria would hold together, just as the Kaiser on another occasion tested the British and French Entente.

The upshot of the diplomatic negotiations was that Austria retained Bosnia and Herzegovina, paid Turkey an indemnity, surrendered the policing of the Montenegrin coast, where Bar now became a free port, and last, but not least, abandoned the Sandjak of Novi-Pazar, ostensibly to show how innocent she was of further desire for territory, but actually because the Austrian General Staff had expressed their opinion that the Sandjak would be a death-trap for an Austrian army in time of war.

Thus a certain amount of dust was thrown in the eyes of the Powers, and the fact that gradually emerged from the cloud was that the Morava valley running through Serbia was the high road of the Eastern Push.

CHAPTER XI

THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN AUSTRIAN AMBITIONS AND THE JUGOSLAV IDEA OF UNITY

To the foreigner reading the history and the literature of the South Slavs, few things appear more striking than the power of the

national (spoken) literature. The poets told the glories of a past age, and after the lapse of centuries South Slav races, separated from each other by geographical and political barriers, some under the rule of Austria and some under Turkey, and with no unity of administration in either empire, were still one at heart.

Neither Turkey nor Austria at first realised the significance—perhaps they did not even suspect the existence, of the unseen forces in their midst. When its spirit manifested itself in action in the nineteenth century, Turkey thought to quell it by force of arms. Austria and Hungary, with more astuteness, tried to quell it by suppressing the South Slav language and by insidiously diverting intellectual energy into authorised Germanic and Magyar channels. But the national tenacity of the South Slavs baffled Turkish terrorism and all the expedients that a well-organised Austrian bureaucracy could devise to suppress it.

Perhaps the most astonishing power of passive resistance to Germanic absorption is found in the history of the Slovenes, the oldest branch of the South Slavs, who inhabit the north-western corner of the Balkans (Carniola, Istria, Goritza and the southern portions of Carinthia and Styria). They formed an independent state early in the seventh century, but were conquered by Charlemagne, and never since recovered their independence. In

the thirteenth century, after many vicissitudes, they came under the rule of the Habsburgs, and, with *Austria*, the *Eastern March* of the *Carlovingian Empire*, they formed the nucleus of the present *Austrian Empire*. In the middle of the nineteenth century we find the Slovenes struggling against the Germans for their national rights as, in a different way, they had struggled over a thousand years before. Their present-day quest was unity of administration, equality with other races in *Austria*, and a Slovene university.

It was *Croatia*, however, that bore the brunt of the South Slav struggle within *Austria*. Though incorporated with the "lands of St. Stephen's Crown," she had never been actually conquered by *Hungary*. After being a powerful independent state in the tenth and eleventh centuries, *Croatia* had, in 1102, chosen as her ruler King Koloman of *Hungary*. The two countries remained for a long time sister kingdoms, but as *Hungary* grew in power, *Croatia's* position became more and more that of a vassal state. During the occupation of *Hungary* by the *Turks* she again grew almost to the position of equality, and at the time of the *Pragmatic Sanction* she defined her status in these words: "Neither force nor conquest united us with the *Hungarians*, but by our spontaneous and free desire we submitted ourselves, not to their kingdom, but to their king, so long as he be of the house of *Austria*." Towards the end

of the eighteenth century her power waned again, and a long struggle ensued against her threatened absorption by Hungary. Her resistance became accentuated after the French occupation of Illyria. Early in the nineteenth century the Magyars began their efforts to suppress the Croatian language, and the word "Illyria" was forbidden.

Then came the year 1848—a crucial one in the history of the race question in Austria. The Magyars had thirstily imbibed Western ideals, but, with the narrow application of great ideas so common in reformers, they read into them only one meaning, government of Magyars by Magyars, and refused to admit the implication of government of Slavs by Slavs. Instead of asking for Federalism, which would have given each race a chance of development on its own lines, they demanded the Dual Kingdom of Austria and Hungary.

The South Slavs of Hungary at this point suggested that the national rights, not only of Magyars, but of South Slavs and Rumanians, should be recognised in Hungary. Yellachitch, Ban of Croatia, was one of the leaders of this movement, and he and Bishop Strossmayer, both Roman Catholics, exhorted their people to lay aside religious differences and remember that Croats and Serbs were both one and the same race. Meanwhile, the Orthodox Serbian patriarch of Karlovtsi preached in the same sense to his people, and

the Serbian provinces of South Hungary (including Syrmia) demanded one administration under a Voivode of their own, and union with Croatia. It is significant that at the opening of the Croatian Diet the Orthodox patriarch of Karlovitz attended High Mass at Zagreb, and the Roman Catholic bishop sang the *Te Deum* in Old Slavonic.

The same year further evidence of the awakening of Slav self-consciousness was shown at the Slav Congress at Prague, which was attended by Russians, Poles, Serbs and Croats, Slovenes, and Slovaks, under the chairmanship of the celebrated Czech scholar, Palacky. Its speeches reached a high tone, and they throw much light on the attitude of Austrian Slavs towards the Austrian Empire. Palacky himself believed in a system of Federalism in Austria, by which the different provinces, divided up according to nationality, should enjoy autonomy, and he considered that the Austrian Slavs ought to concentrate on this. Cryptic phrases of his reveal, however, the prevision of some political development that would readjust the boundaries of European Empires. Of Bohemia he says: "Before Austria was, we were; and when Austria no longer is, we shall be." Like other Slav leaders in Austria, he struck a high note in his exhortations to his people. "Our nation must not forget that it is fighting for justice, that it has no right to imitate the violent methods of its adversaries, and that

its triumph must be that of civilisation." Bishop Strossmayer on many occasions urged an equally high standard of ideals. "I preach over and over again," he wrote to Gladstone, "that we can only be worthy of freedom and culture by extending the same freedom to all others with whom we come into contact, of whatever faith or race they may be, and by letting them partake equally with ourselves of the benefits of freedom and civilisation."

The spirit of Kossuth, the foremost representative of Magyar idealism, showed more narrowness of vision, although the impassioned eloquence with which he pleaded the Magyar cause won him the sympathies of progressives throughout Europe. Encouraged by his words of high idealism, a South Slav deputation waited upon him, and said they were ready to die for Hungary, if she would respect their rights as a nation. "What do you mean by a nation?" he asked. "A race that has its own language, its own traditions, its own civilisation, and the self-consciousness to preserve them." But Kossuth would not consent to another race within Hungary being regarded as a nation, and said the sword must decide the dispute. Thus the Magyars refused the requests of the South Slavs just as Austria refused the request of the Magyars, and a civil war became inevitable. The firm attitude of the Croats had already been defined by Yellachitch. "The fraternal union of eight hundred years," he said at the opening of the

Croatian Diet, "promises us a friendly solution of the present dispute. But should the Magyars assume the rôle of oppressors against us and our kinsmen in Hungary, we shall prove to them, with weapons in our hands, that the time is long past when one nation can rule over another." In the war which followed between Austria and Hungary the Hungarian Serbs fought on the side of the Imperial army, and the Magyars were defeated, but only after Austria had called in the help of Russia.

Loyalty to Austria did not further the cause of the South Slavs at all. She "astonished the world by the greatness of her ingratitude," and "gave to the Serbs as a reward what she gave to the Magyars as a punishment." Together they suffered the system of militarism, clericalism, and Germanisation, that became the order of the day. But after the defeat of Austria by Prussia in 1866, German Austria was not strong enough to force her will upon all the peoples whom she governed. Hence her agreement with Hungary in 1867 to form a Dual Monarchy, in which Austria and Hungary were to enjoy equal rights. This arrangement put the Slavs in a worse position than they had ever been in before, and this at a moment when a Trial Kingdom, with the Slavs as a third partner, might have solved many difficulties. Trialism was hateful to German Austria and the Magyars of Hungary, because they saw that a

Slav state within Austria was bound by force of numbers and by the ever-growing power of Slav civilisation to obtain the hegemony of the Empire, and they concentrated their efforts on preventing their union in much the same way as the Powers prevented the union of the South Slavs in the Balkans.

The racial question in Austria-Hungary is such a complicated one that Austrian diplomats had not much difficulty at first in achieving their end as far as the large Slav divisions were concerned. Poles, Czechs (Bohemians) and South Slavs had different political interests. The Poles naturally looked towards a reunion of all the Poles, and the resurrection of their ancient Poland. The Czechs were likewise a race apart, separated from the South Slavs by vast Austro-Hungarian territories. Where union was a question of practical politics—indeed, a mere matter of evolution—was among the South Slavs (Serbo-Croats and Slovenes), and what Germans and Magyars both dreaded was that this rival race should obtain the hegemony of the Empire whether other Slavs joined them or not. "Austria can only continue to exist as a South Slavonic empire," said Sir Arthur Evans about forty years ago, meaning that Austria must either give the Slavs rein or split the Empire. Hence frenzied exertions on the part of the Austro-Hungarian administration to metamorphose unpleasant statistics that could not be juggled with for ever. Ger-

mans were brought to South Slav provinces. Slavs were driven to emigration by economic pressure. It is noteworthy that while there are hardly any Serbs from Serbia in America and the British colonies, there are said to be no fewer than 800,000 South Slavs from Austria and Hungary. The traveller sailing round the Bocche of Cattaro is struck by the number of deserted houses, of which the former inhabitants have emigrated. It was made impossible for them to develop freely at home along their own intellectual lines, although they were tempted with possibilities of Germanic culture. In short, the whole state organisation was pitted against them: the educational system, the economic system, the military system.

South Slav movements towards unity were treated as something akin to high treason. Yet one cannot insist too strongly on this point: such movements were a normal racial development such as had taken place in other countries. England, for instance, was seven kingdoms with a medley of kindred races, Angles, Saxons and Jutes, before she was the England of Englishmen, and it was only centuries later that she became Great Britain. The history of France was analogous. Russia achieved unity more recently, Germany and Italy quite recently. Similar developments in the Balkans had been hampered only by abnormal conditions.

All efforts to adjust rival interests proved abortive.

In 1868 a contract was signed between Hungary and Croatia, by which the ancient privileges of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia were to some extent confirmed, and they were to form a triune state with autonomy; but this autonomy soon proved to exist only on paper. Provision was made for interference by a Ban appointed by the Crown, and at the same time Austria-Hungary began her career as arch-forgery by cooking a document that deprived Croatia of her natural port of Rieka (Fiume). In the original document recording the agreement between the Magyars and the Croats there is to be found pasted over the original words concerning Rieka a piece of rag which declares it to be an Hungarian town, whereas the hidden words below show that no such agreement was ever made. Economic grip on the country was further ensured by not allowing the Croatian railways to be linked up with great commercial lines. The basis of the suffrage was farcical, the chief voting element being the officials who were economically dependent on servility. Gendarmes dealt with recalcitrant voters. Falsified registers, bribery, the suppression of societies (even choral societies!), the arresting of deputies, became the order of the day in South Hungary and in Croatia. The Assembly in Croatia was continually suspended or prorogued: the Constitution was a dead letter. For twenty years (1883 to 1903) Croatia was ruled by Ban Khuen-Hederváry, who instituted an era of corruption perhaps unparalleled

in European history. Trial by jury for press actions was suspended for three years, officials could be dismissed for voting in opposition to the Ban, or even for abstaining from voting. More than one case is on record of a voter only being able to get to the poll by lying on the flat of his back under a load of hay in a peasant's cart. On one occasion the gendarmerie deputed to terrorise electors killed eight peasants and wounded sixty others. It is on record that Baron Kállay, the historian, remarked to the correspondent of *The Times* in Vienna: "My countrymen have treated Croatia badly, prevented its development, and exploited it financially; they will have to pay for it one day."

Dalmatia was never even permitted to take her place as part of the triune kingdom. But the Croatians, exhausted by the struggle, remained on the whole quiescent till the fate of Bosnia and Herzegovina revived their racial antagonism. The Treaty of Berlin put Bosnia in the position of belonging theoretically to Turkey, practically to Austria-Hungary, countries both inimically disposed to her. To suppress the indignation of the little country of one and a half million, who resisted the mandate of the Powers by force of arms, Austria had to keep an army of occupation only slightly smaller than that which Great Britain employs for the defence of the Indian Empire and its population of three hundred millions. The effect on Bosnian mentality of

this international outrage was lamentable. The people settled down to that disbelief in human justice which is a poison in the life of nations, and the direct cause of anarchy and crime. In 1879 Strossmayer wrote to Gladstone, "The state of Bosnia is now worse under the Magyars than formerly under the Turks." Austria had pleaded as a reason for the occupation the necessity of a continental hinterland to Dalmatia. After thirty years not a single railway connected Dalmatia and Bosnia. Private enterprise was discouraged on the ground that it would compete with a future state railway. From Dalmatia it was quicker to go to Petrograd than to its own hinterland. Judging by the number of its schools it was not only behind Serbia, but could not even compare with Macedonia and Old Serbia. As late as 1911, Dr. Seton-Watson published information that showed that in half the province of Dalmatia ninety-nine per cent. of the population were illiterate, and that three hundred villages had no school.

At the same time public buildings were raised at the expense of the people, which gave an air of well-being to Bosnia that deceived visitors. Nowhere were journalists better treated than by Bosnian officials. They were conducted, often free of expense, to what officialdom wanted them to see, and trained clerks instructed them on what they ought to know, while they were manœuvred away from

what they ought not to see. Bosnia by these means came to be advertised throughout Europe as an excellent example of what Germanic culture could achieve in the way of colonial government. On her spurious reputation in Bosnia Austria intended to base her claim to the absorption of other Balkan units, which she represented as incapable of civilisation if left to themselves.

The year 1903 was a turning-point in the history of the South Slav question. In the first place the régime of Khuen-Hederváry ceased in Croatia, and, with the murder of Alexander, Austria was given a second chance of a happy settlement of the question within the Empire. Instead of profiting by it, she used the bad reputation acquired by Serbia as an excuse to ill-treat South Slavs in general, and to prepare for the absorption of all of them, not as a people with democratic rights (which might have given them the hegemony of the Empire, since they would then be the largest racial unit in it), but as a people who could be kept under the heel of a police régime till such time as they should show active acquiescence in the supreme bliss of Germanic and Magyar culture. It is a remarkable fact that Kállay, Governor of Bosnia, put his own history of Serbia on the list of books forbidden to be used in that province, showing that it was to no perversion of facts that officials objected, but to the truth as they themselves saw it.

But the designs of Austria only became patent in the course of years, and in the meantime the South Slavs did everything possible to adjust the political situation on amicable lines with Austria and Hungary. Their night of despair had given way to hope. A Slav leader had arisen in Prague, the Slovak Masaryk. He taught and inspired a rising generation of South Slavs, and largely through them national self-consciousness was again awakened, and leaders sprang up on all sides, determined to wrestle with the inertia of a quarter of a century.

Not the least interesting and successful experiment to preserve their identity as a nation was that of some leading men of the former "military frontiers." In these parts every man had once been either a soldier or a worker on the soil. Such a population, as it emerged into normal conditions of life, with none of the ordinary political, educational, or economic traditions behind them, seemed to be at the mercy of the Germanising and Magyarising tendencies of their rulers. But they showed just the same determination as other Slavs to preserve their unity, and, baulked of development along political lines, and foiled in their aspirations towards national education in the state schools, they were astute enough to recognise the significance of the fact that their chief interests were bound up in the land, and that in the agricultural districts their power was unassailable. Under the guidance of

some men of unusual intelligence, they started an Economy League, centring round an Agricultural League at Zagreb, which formed thousands of branches all over the country. To these were affiliated Co-operative Land Societies, and the Slavs in the country were implored not to let the land go out of their hands. The sons of peasants sent from the country and trained at Zagreb showed rare efficiency in agricultural and industrial matters, and soon became famous in other countries. Denationalisation was thus frustrated by a national organisation that had ostensibly nothing to do with politics, but which nevertheless bound the people together by building upon the foundations of their most vital interests.

In 1905, the general movement towards unity showed itself in unmistakable strength within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In that year forty Croat deputies met at Rieka, and went so far as to declare themselves ready to support the Magyar Independents if they would respect the national rights of Croatia. A few weeks later Serbian deputies met at Zadar, and recorded their adhesion to the Rieka resolution, declaring that "Croats and Serbs are one in race and language." The consequence of this political union was a brilliant victory at the polls in 1906 for the Serbo-Croat Coalition in Croatia. Austria met the difficulty as usual by playing off Slavs against Magyars. The Magyar "irreconcilables"

were given portfolios by the Emperor, and thus diverted from the fulfilling of their promises to the Croats and Serbs.

The tyranny suffered by the South Slavs of Austria-Hungary threw into all the greater relief the extraordinary political development of Serbia, whose constitution now was one of the most advanced in the world. Its suffrage basis was wider than that of England, and it had created a system of proportional representation such as England to-day treats as almost too Utopian to be a question of practical politics. The fellow-feeling among the South Slavs on either side of the frontier was watched with suspicion by Austria. Aehrenthal decided that the existence of Serbia must not be tolerated. The more developed its democracy, the greater its danger to Austria as a magnet to other Slav states. Accordingly, in 1907 was inaugurated the policy of libellous accusations against the South Slavs, which were calculated to sow dissension among them and to represent them to the eyes of Europe as a people beyond the pale of civilisation. These libels were so timed as to pave the way to Austrian encroachments in the Balkans.

Thus in October 1907, when the final annexation of the Balkans was being contemplated, a plot was "revealed," destined to bring about bad relations between Serbia and Montenegro, and to horrify the Powers. Some one appeared at Cettinje, the Montenegrin

capital, with bombs, etc., and went to the prefecture to denounce a plot hatched at Beograd. Nastitch, afterwards known to be a police spy in the pay of the Austro-Bosnian Government, came forward to corroborate the accusation. The bombs, people were asked to believe, had been destined for Austria-Hungary, but Prince George of Serbia had preferred to send them to Montenegro to blow up his grandfather and other relatives, including his sister, who had gone to nurse her grandmother at Cettinje.

The year 1908 saw the formal annexation of Bosnia, and the Slav indignation that then manifested itself coincided with an attempt on the part of Austria to terrorise them and to sow dissension between Serbs and Croats. Arrests began in August. By January 1909 fifty-eight Serbs were in prison in Zagreb for political reasons. The accusations against the prisoners were that they were connected with a Pan-Serb revolutionary movement in Croatia, directed by a Beograd society which aimed at founding a vast independent Serbia which should include the Austrian South Slav dominions. The notorious Nastitch was the principal witness—the only one connecting the movement with Beograd. The trial was a travesty of justice. The judges openly showed their sympathy with the prosecution. Only twenty out of three hundred witnesses for the defence were allowed to appear, while no fewer than two hundred and seventy-six were called for the prosecu-

tion. Essential questions were ruled out of order.

Some of the accusations were farcical. One witness was proved guilty of owning a portrait of King Peter of Serbia. Another prisoner committed the offence of possessing a picture of Gambrinus which a peasant had mistaken for King Peter. A Serb doctor was asked if he did not refuse to wear cravats because the word cravat resembled Croat. This was an attempt to prove that Serbs hated Croats, but the prisoner answered that the question was ridiculous, and it provoked merriment in court. Hereupon the President said: "There is nothing to laugh at there!" Witnesses who denied ever having said what was attributed to them were arrested on a charge of perjury. One witness for the prosecution boasted of the money he got for his services.

As the farce proceeded, the eyes of Europe became riveted upon it. Dr. Seton-Watson was present at the trial, and published his impressions. Professor Masaryk denounced the proceedings in the Austrian Parliament in no measured terms. The comedy ended, not, as one might have expected, in the collapse of the prosecution, but in thirty-one convictions, varying in punishment from five to twelve years, and amounting in all to 184 years. Its main objects were not, however, realised. Croats remained true to the Serbs, and acted as their counsel without payment throughout the trial, and helped to support the families of the poorer prisoners. Their

common indignation at the injustice of the proceedings cemented the bond between them. Nor was Europe convinced by it of the iniquities of the South Slavs: she was, on the contrary, suspicious of the morals of Austria.

It is possible that these suspicions might have died a natural death if the celebrated historian, Friedjung, had not published his famous article of denunciation in March 1909, at the very moment when war was expected between Austria on the one hand, and Russia and Serbia on the other. It was based on documents provided by the Austrian Foreign Office, and it contained apparently conclusive proofs of Serbian propaganda, furthered by Serbian official circles, among the Austrian Serbs and Croats, notably among members of the Coalition, with the idea of creating a large independent Serbia. These "facts," exposed by one of the most reliable historians of the day, created a profound impression, not only in Austria, but also in foreign countries. Its purpose was obvious: it was to justify the annexation of Serbia in the event of war. "Should it be ordained," said Dr. Friedjung, "that Austrian arms shall thoroughly purge Belgrade of the nest of conspirators and help the healthy elements of the Serbian people to triumph, this would be a civilising deed of great value." The Serbo-Croat Coalition brought a libel suit against Dr. Friedjung and a paper that had published similar accusations, and the case, which was considered of international importance, was watched by

foreign correspondents from far and wide. Of twenty-four documents talked about by the defence, not a single original was produced, and photographs of only three. Bozhidar Markovitch, Professor of Law at the University of Beograd, who figured in the documents, was proved to have been in Germany at the time he was represented in them as presiding over a revolutionary committee in Beograd. A representative of the Serbian Foreign Office appeared at the trial, and by his evidence annihilated the case of official complicity. The documents showed an ignorance of public affairs, and contained incorrect references to political events which it was ludicrous to ascribe to any one connected with the Serbian Foreign Office. When the case had gone far enough to vindicate the innocence of the Serbo-Croats of the accusations published against them, it was settled by agreement outside the courts. If any shadow of a doubt remained of the guilt of the Austrian Foreign Office in the eyes of her partisans, it was dispelled by a man called Vassitch, who came forward to tell how the forgeries used by Dr. Friedjung had been manufactured at the Austro-Hungarian Legation at Beograd, and how he had been employed to remove the Croaticisms of the language.

Professor Masaryk made the story public in Austria, and asked questions about it in the Austrian Parliament. Count Forgách, the Minister at Beograd responsible for the outrage, said he had not done nearly all that was

demanding of him. The plot, it transpired, originated at the Austrian Foreign Office.

In the meantime the verdict of the High Treason Trial in Zagreb had been quashed by a new ministry, which thus admitted that it had been a miscarriage of justice. But on the whole it seemed to serve little purpose to show up tyranny. Count Forgách, the forger, was made a Privy Councillor, and, later, Permanent Under Secretary at the Austrian Foreign Office, where he showed an implacable hatred towards the Slavs. He was largely responsible for the repeated efforts to enmesh Serbia in difficulties that would lead to war, which became so conspicuous a feature of Austrian foreign policy. He was one of the people who drew up the note to Serbia which actually did lead to war in 1914.

We have given a lengthy account of these trials because never before had Western Europe such an opportunity of gauging the true relations between the Austro-Hungarian authorities and the South Slavs, and of recognising in the official accusations levelled against Serbia the old story of the wolf accusing the lamb of stirring up the water he was drinking.

In the meantime the conditions in Croatia and in Bosnia went from bad to worse. The Constitution of Croatia was abolished, the Charter of the Serb Orthodox Church suspended, and a dictator appointed. Bosnia had no Constitution worthy of the name, but all sorts of choral and gymnastic societies, sus-

pected of political tendencies, were suppressed instead.

It is an evil day in the history of a nation when fair means are impotent to right wrongs, and foul means the only way to check tyranny. The point had been reached in South Slav Austria when the nation was goaded to madness. The spirit was abroad—and it affected especially young unbalanced students—which saw in the present situation the call for a Brutus or a Charlotte Corday.

CHAPTER XII

THE BALKAN ALLIANCE

WHILE the unifying process among the South Slavs was going on in Austria, a movement was afoot south of the Save and the Danube which had for its object the uniting of the Balkan Christians against the Turks. That Montenegro and Serbia should unite astonished no one. The possibility of Serbia and Bulgaria forming a close bond had been almost, if not quite, a question of practical politics in the time of Garashanin in the early 'forties, and again under Michael in the 'sixties, but had apparently died for ever after the Treaty of Berlin. The reopening of friendly relations by suppressing the Customs between the two countries in 1906, significant as it was, had not altogether opened the eyes

of diplomats to the lie of the land. As for union between Bulgaria and Greece, its possibility was derided. Mr. Adam Gibbons, correspondent of the *New York Herald*, when he tentatively suggested the combination to the Grand Vizier in 1911, met with the curt reply : " My time is too precious to discuss such foolish hypotheses."

The unexpected was made possible by a noteworthy conjunction of circumstances. In the first place, Turkey was in a parlous state, and the condition of her Christian population cried for intervention. The Young Turk movement, started by supporters of European democratic doctrines, had all the Old Turk prejudices concerning Christian subjects, and it is notorious that the tyranny of a spurious democracy is worse than the tyranny of an absolute monarch. In the second place, the Powers chiefly interested in the Balkans changed their tactics, and favoured Balkan Union, though for very different reasons. In the third place, three of the Balkan states produced remarkable statesmen at one and the same time : the Serbian Milovanovitch, whose place was taken at his death by Pashitch ; the Bulgarian Gueshoff, whose foreign education (he was a student of Owen's College, Manchester) had given him the power to see Balkan affairs in better perspective than most of his countrymen ; and the Greek Venizelos, probably the greatest living politician, whose name is known all over the world to-day.

Russia's interest in the alliance was partly

Austrians had lost 330,000 men, of whom 68,000 were prisoners, while an enormous quantity of guns, ammunition, transport and stores had fallen into Serbian hands. So incredible was the news that Serbia had to tell the rest of Europe that for a while it refused to credit it. Serbia was now the only one of the Allies who had carried on an entirely successful campaign against the enemy in Europe.

Unfortunately, Austria left behind a trail of disease in the blood-stained country, and there was not enough hospital accommodation to meet it. About a third of Serbia's few doctors died, and a number of foreign ones. The British papers were full of heartrending appeals for help for Serbia in what was then looked upon as her supreme trial. It was hardly conceivable that there was to be yet a greater. The British Government responded by sending a Sanitary Commission, and Russia, France and America all came to the rescue. But in the very nature of things much of this help arrived too late, and the brunt of the fight against disease seems to have fallen upon the Scottish Women's Hospitals and those of the Serbian Relief Fund, and several other units sent by private subscription from England. To Dr. Elsie Inglis and her women doctors, nurses and orderlies, Serbia raised her first memorial of this war—a beautiful fountain near Mladenovatz.

In September 1915 the Austrians again turned their eyes towards Serbia, and con-

sidered the subjugation of the little country so important that Germany sent Mackensen to take charge of the operations. Up to this point Serbia had been a wedge between the Central Powers and their ally Turkey, and potential allies Bulgaria and Greece. The necessity of opening up lines of communication with Constantinople became apparent owing to the blockade of Germany by the allied navies. Moreover, if Serbia fell into the hands of the Central Powers, they would in their turn drive a wedge between Russia and her Western allies, and seriously impede the delivery of ammunition from England. The Allies, meanwhile, hardly realised the danger they were running, although it was obvious that a defeat for them in the Near East would have disastrous political consequences. It would seriously affect the prestige of Great Britain in India, and could not fail to have some repercussion on the attitude of Greece, and of Rumania, who was tempted to join the Allies in order to recover Transylvania from Hungary. They persisted in believing that they could induce Bulgaria to come into the war on their side by offering her that part of Serbia for which the second Balkan war had been fought, and which had long been a bone of contention between the two countries—promising Serbia compensation in other quarters. But the hope was vain. On September 23 Bulgaria began to mobilise in collusion with the Central Powers, and explained her attitude to the Allies as that of

“armed neutrality.” Greece also mobilised, and called her neutrality “benevolent.” At this point the Serbs, who were not unnaturally distrustful of the Bulgarians, massed troops on their eastern frontiers, and wanted at once to attack Bulgaria and impede mobilisation in her western provinces. Organised as they were, and splendidly equipped after months of respite from fighting, they could probably have struck a telling blow against Bulgaria, and might have reached Sofia before much resistance could have been organised. The Allies refused to allow them to do so. So blinded were they by pro-Bulgar prejudices that they believed Bulgaria to be arming to come in on their side, in spite of the fact that she had replied to the offer of territory by saying that she could win what she wanted for herself. It transpired, however, that German and Austrian officers were active in Bulgaria, and Russia sent an ultimatum to her demanding their dismissal.

Meanwhile, Austro-German forces bore down upon Serbia from the north and west. The few French, British and Russian batteries of heavy artillery that had been sent to Beograd were silenced in one day, and the burden of defence fell upon the Serbian infantry. In spite of the fact that they were far outnumbered by the enemy, it was only after a seven days' battle that the enemies forced the rivers. On October 14 the Bulgarians attacked Serbia from the south-east, and, after terrific resistance from forces half their number, took

Skoplye and Veles. The Serbians buoyed themselves up with the hope that French and British help would arrive in time to save them. Sir Edward Grey had told Bulgaria that if she attacked, England would help Serbia "without reserve and without qualification." Right up through the centre of Serbia the towns along the lines which the Allies were expected to follow prepared their bunting to greet the armies that were to save them. But they listened in vain for the guns that never came, for the few troops dispatched by France and England to Salonica were unable to push any further than Krivolak, and were forced to retreat even from there. Between them and the Serbians lay the long Bulgarian line. The Serbians, meanwhile, who had been attempting the impossible feat of defending about eight hundred miles of front, were being surrounded by the combined forces of three enemies. The Greeks, instead of supporting them as they were bound by treaty to do, were suspected of the treacherous intention of coming in on the side of the Central Powers.

The Serbian Government, accompanied by the representatives of the Foreign Legations, retired from one town to another, while frantic telegrams for help were dispatched to the Powers of the Entente. Nish had to be abandoned, and for a short time refuge was found at Kraljevo. But soon Kraljevo became impossible, and Rashka, the ancient cradle of Serbia, now a village of some six

hundred inhabitants, became the seat of government. It was a kind of eyrie in the hills, seemingly beyond the molestation of armies. Here the news that arrived became worse and worse. The legations were told to move on, and they followed the course of the Ibar towards Mitrovitza, where the roads ran along the sides of precipices, and where the dangers of transit were so great that one vehicle after another overturned. Luggage had to be abandoned freely. The uniform case of a French Minister found its way to the bottom of the river, and the ciphers of the Italian Government were only saved by the devotion of a servant badly wounded in a carriage accident. Mitrovitza became invaded by the retiring population, straggling soldiers, all kinds of officials, foreign missions. The fight for food began, and all the time the news from the fronts became more gloomy. A glance at the map will show how near the enemy were drawing. Austrians with bands of Albanians were advancing along the Ibar from the north, other Austrian troops from Novi-Pazar, while the Bulgarians were attacking, at Kachanik, the pass that gave the key to the situation from the south. In short, a turning movement of great danger was in full swing, and the nearly completed circle in which the Serbian army, the Government, the Foreign Ministers, the King, were caught, was becoming smaller and smaller. But the tragedy was not realised yet. The hope that the Allies would break through from Salonica and save

them was strong in the hearts of all. The catastrophe that was actually befalling them seemed too great to be within the bounds of possibility.

The only railway left now to the Serbs was the Mitrovitza-Ferizovitch line. Train after train steamed south from Mitrovitza with a strange confusion of travellers, while the neighbouring roads were blocked with lines of cars, lorries, carts, horses, soldiers, prisoners, refugees, men, women and children. In the medley the motor of the Crown Prince was plainly recognisable. All converged on the historic plain of Kossovo, and as the train with the Foreign Legations passed, its corridors were blocked with diplomats gazing with emotion at the scene, guessing something of what it meant to the Serbs. Here, less than three years before, after the battle of Kumanovo, the day of vengeance for Kossovo, soldiers, who struck observers as unemotional, had knelt and prayed and kissed the ground, and declared that death was now easy. Here even to-day they tried desperately to stiffen themselves for any fate, and maintain again in defeat the glorious traditions of 1389. But they were beginning to realise that they were being abandoned, for reasons that to them were inscrutable, and over the hills ran the terrible black moving line, a country's uprooted population. Above rose the impassive snowy heights of Kara Dag. After Ferizovitch the road wound upwards, and presently the town of Prizren came into sight, hang-

ing in terraces on a hillside. Here news of desperate resistance at Kachanik filtered through. It was a last attempt to join hands with the Allies; but what could the Serbians do against such odds? They failed, and the enemy now thought they had the army in its grip, since it was hemmed in on the west, where alone it had not troops to meet it, by the roadless mountains of Albania.

The height of the tragedy was now beginning to be suspected. Refugees fleeing towards the south began to turn back. Was retreat cut off? No one seemed sure of what had happened, but M. Pashitch issued the sinister statement to the legations that the headquarters staff could no longer answer for the safety of the diplomatic bodies. The Bulgarians had come over the Babuna mountain and might arrive first at Debar, and so cut off the only road to Bitoly. The best thing to do was to turn back and follow the Djakovo, Petch, Skadar, Podgoritza route to the sea, and try and embark at San Giovanni di Medua for Italy. They turned in accordance with these orders, and the medley of people around them, who watched their movements to know the lie of the land, began to understand.

About three weeks later the Serbian generals met at Petch to discuss what was to be done in this last extremity. General Mishitch was of opinion that they should make one final desperate stand; but the majority of the generals were against a sacrifice of life that seemed to serve little purpose. They decided

upon a retreat along such lines as were followed by the Government and the Foreign Legations. For the sake of safety, and the better to solve the food problem, the army followed as many courses as possible; but the main bodies of those that retreated last came by Petch, Podgoritzza and Skadar, either by the Berane or Rozhay routes. Nothing of the nature of a vehicle could follow the tracks by which they had to go, but fortunately they were able to destroy their guns and much of the transport and stores that might help the enemy armies. The chagrin of seeing this final destruction where the roads ended near Petch was not without its effect on the spirit of the troops. Soon the snowy heights were blackened by what the correspondents call "the exodus of a nation rather than retreat of an army." Mothers, by order of the Government, sent their young sons to join in it rather than have them fall into the hands of the enemy. The population who were left in Serbia, and who had so lately prepared for the triumphal entry of British and French into their towns, sprinkled white powder on the roads instead, and showed white flags in token of surrender.

People who shared in the retreat that followed tell a confused story of cold, hunger, gorgeous scenery, Albanian ambushes, of paths covered with the carcasses of horses, of men dying by the wayside. We hear of the Ministers of Russia and Great Britain lying on straw next to the Serbian Foreign Minister,

his wife and son, while in the next room lay the Italian and French Ministers, secretaries, consuls, dragoman, servants, *pêle-mêle*. We hear of the King lying on a stretcher, drawn by four bullocks, sharing the difficulties of the road with the common soldier. Among the war photographs exhibited recently at South Kensington there was perhaps none more touching than that of the aged Serbian monarch sitting by the wayside amidst the Albanian snows. The Archbishop of Beograd also shared in the flight, bringing with him the relics of Stephen the First-Crowned, followed by priests with lighted tapers. It was as if the Serbs carried their past with them.

Meanwhile, the agony of mind of the Serbian soldiers can be imagined when we remember that they knew what desolation another Austrian invasion had left behind it, and realised what might be the treatment of their wives and children in their absence. But they pressed doggedly on, and soon so great were their personal trials that but one or two thoughts remained to them. The desire for bread shut out remoter preoccupations: a place to lie down and be at rest, a refuge somewhere, anywhere, was the other. The sea they thought of as the end of their trials. There the French and the British would have food to meet them. The patience of these emaciated beings was pathetic when they found the sea was not free, when Skadar did not offer the bread they wanted. Yet some

were so far gone that they only choked and died when a crust was given them.

The Serbian Government was face to face with a terrible problem. Was their army to starve on the shore, watching the destroyers of their allies pass, watching food ships sink as they approached land, watching them blown to pieces by enemy aeroplanes as they hove alongside? The harbour of San Giovanni di Medua, strewn with the hulls and masts of sunken vessels, told an eloquent tale of people who were trying to help, and could not. The circumstances were enough to break the *moral* of the strongest minded. At last the welcome news came that the *Ville de Brindisi* had won through—with food for five or six days. Meanwhile, the number of soldiers was increasing day by day, to the amazement of foreigners, who could hardly believe such feats of endurance possible by such numbers.

Presently news came that the Austrians were marching on Skadar, that Drach was threatened. The historic Black Mountain had fallen to the enemy, and King Nicholas, with his diplomatic staffs, after some unsuccessful *pourparlers* with the Austrian generals, was fleeing towards safety too. Only across the seas was a refuge to be found, and the Allies undertook the great adventure of shipping a nation's army. Perhaps when the history of the war comes to be written, one of the most remarkable feats of the allied navies will be found to be the transportation of Serbia's soldiers to Corfu in less than five weeks with-

out an accident. But even at Corfu their trials were not over, and thousands died of diseases caused by the hardships and the strain they had undergone. The little neighbouring island of Vido, the quarantine camp of the sick, was called the Island of Death, so great was the mortality.

But perhaps the greatest of all the tragedies connected with Corfu and Vido is that of Serbia's boys. They started about 30,000 strong on the Serbian frontier. Only about half emerged from the Albanian mountains to the coast, and these "had nothing human about them but their eyes." While waiting for a ship to take them away, thousands perished. Many died on the voyage to the Greek Islands. Here, without proper hospital accommodation, and without the milk that meant life to them, they died at the rate of 100 a day. The survivors are being educated in England and France, except those who are in a consumptive sanatorium in Corsica, or with the army at the Front.

After a period of rest, those of the survivors of the Serbian Army who were physically fit returned to the field, this time in the Salonica district, where they are now fighting side by side with the British and French. Already they have penetrated as far as Bitoly in their own country. The Bulgarians were amazed to see them. "Are you here again?" they said. "We were told you were all dead."

The Serbian retreat across the mountains had not been without its strategic value to the

Allies. It drew the enemies westwards in pursuit, and gave the British and French at Salonica time to dig themselves in. Had it not been for this their position might have been a very precarious one.

Meanwhile, the fate of the South Slavs in Austria rivalled in tragedy that of their co-nationalists in Serbia. After the Archduke's death they had suffered persecution at the hands of the Austro-Germans and Magyars. When the war broke out their position was tragic. According to the official Bosnian paper, the *Bosnische Post*, between February 20 and March 23, 1915, 5,260 families were turned out of Bosnia alone, and by March 1915 there were 70,000 refugees congregated in Montenegro. Hundreds and thousands more were driven into the interior, where many of them died of hunger. Seventy executions took place in those early months in Sarajevo, and about eighty at Trebinje and Mostar. In Dalmatia South Slavs connected in any way with public affairs during the last twenty years were liable to be flung into prison, and many were executed. In the province of Syrmia (Croatia) fifty cases of hanging were reported, and, to terrorise the population, the corpses of the victims were left hanging for weeks. Many of these men died singing their national songs, and exhorting the onlookers not to betray their race. In the midst of this persecution, men of military age were called up to fight Austria's battles

against the Allies, who they hoped and prayed would win. As we know, thousands and thousands of these soldiers turned and faced their tormentors, fighting side by side with the Russian army in the Dobrudja campaign. It is known that some of the wounded left on the field of battle killed each other rather than fall into the hands of the Austrians. Only patriots could accept the risks that they ran: war without quarter, persecution for their families. They faced them in the belief that by so doing they would "hold a promise for the future" that the past had not given them. Only about thirty per cent. of them ever returned from those fatal battles. Truly, in the words of Zmay Yovanovitch, "Stronger than tyranny is faith," and with him we may well ask—

"And what the power that drove thee on,
and bore

Thee up, and lent thee wings?

It was the hope

Within the brain. Without it there had
been

No flight beyond the darkling clouds. Deep
sleep

Instead, the headlong fall to depths from
which

Man rises not. Without it were the world
A tomb without a flower, and life a void,
And youth a weary waste of withered
dreams."

The spirit that breathes in these lines gives

us the key to those words of Sir Arthur Evans written at the time of the outbreaks in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 'seventies. He says that people do not understand "how intense are the passions which the wrongs beyond the border rouse among the neighbouring Slavonic populations, how mighty are the silent forces at work in favour of South Slavonic unity and liberation; how vain is the legerdemain of diplomacy and the sand ropes of statesmen, who see governments and nothing but governments. . . . It is the Serbs, and the Serbs alone, who are inspired by those motives and passions which are capable of deciding the destinies of nations. Call it patriotism, call it Pan-Slavism, call it faith, or call it fanaticism, the motive force is there, and it is irresistible."

In a pre-war German pamphlet, called *Germany at the beginning of the Twentieth Century*, occur the words: "In the future whoever begins a war should be guided by his own interests, and not by so-called rights of peoples. One would do well not to allow oneself to be held back by any consideration whatsoever, and not to trouble oneself about public opinion. . . . The more pitilessly one applies the principle of *Væ Victis*, the more secure will be the peace that follows."

It would be a world calamity if such ideas triumphed, and these words express the spirit, so particularly revolting when applied to an heroic race, that the Allies are out to defeat.

In the reconstructed Europe the South Slavs must find their own, and unite as they have long wished to unite. But in these questions a little knowledge is a dangerous thing, and it is well that diplomats should realise that a repetition of the ignorance displayed at the Congress of Berlin in 1878 may plunge a future generation into another world war.

Public opinion is to be created by the man in the street. But, unfortunately, of international politics he knows little or nothing. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that in the past he might almost have believed that they had no conceivable connection with himself. He can never again think along such lines. The misfortunes of one country are the misfortunes of the world, and, conversely, "No European people can pass from misfortune to prosperity without all European people profiting by the change."

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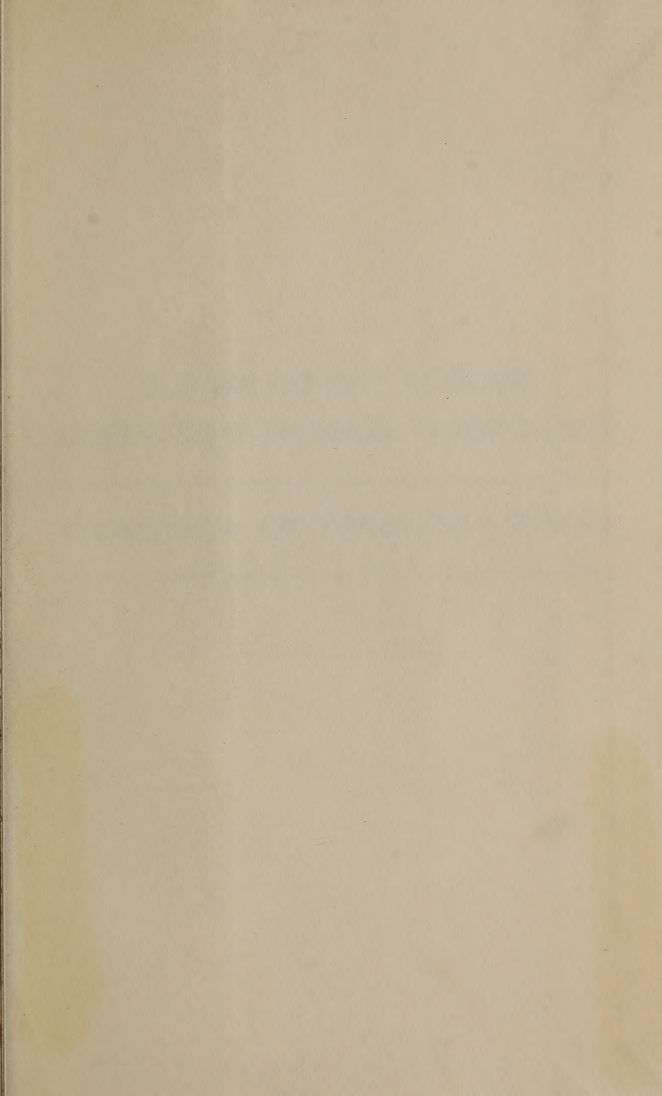
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